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SELECT POEMS

Wordsworth - Tennyson

EDITED BY  
W.J.ALEXANDER


ONTARIO EDITION.

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*Kirkstone Pass : Mountain Scene in the "Lake District."*



# SELECT POEMS

FROM

## WORDSWORTH AND TENNYSON

PRESCRIBED FOR THE JUNIOR MATRICULATION, AND  
FOR ENTRANCE INTO THE NORMAL SCHOOLS  
AND FACULTIES OF EDUCATION,

1915.

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*EDITED WITH BRIEF NOTES.*

BY

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WORDSWORTH

One impulse from a vernal wood. . .

# WORDSWORTH.

## INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS.

(IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN  
BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH. WRITTEN IN GERMANY.)

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe !  
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought !  
And giv'st to forms and images a breath  
And everlasting motion ! not in vain,  
By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn 5  
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me  
The passions that build up our human soul ;  
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man ;  
But with high objects, with enduring things,  
With life and nature ; purifying thus 10  
The elements of feeling and of thought,  
And sanctifying by such discipline  
Both pain and fear,—until we recognize  
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me 15  
With stinted kindness. In November days,  
When vapours rolling down the valleys made  
A lonely scene more lonesome ; among woods  
At noon ; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,  
When, by the margin of the trembling lake, 20  
Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went  
In solitude, such intercourse was mine :  
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,  
And by the waters, all the summer long.  
And in the frosty season, when the sun 25  
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,  
The cottage-windows through the twilight blazed,  
I heeded not the summons : happy time  
It was indeed for all of us ; for me  
It was a time of rapture ! Clear and loud 30

The village-clock tolled six—I wheeled about,  
 Proud and exulting like an untired horse  
 That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel  
 We hissed along the polished ice, in games  
 Confederate, imitative of the chase 35  
 And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,  
 The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare.  
 So through the darkness and the cold we flew,  
 And not a voice was idle: with the din  
 Smitten, the precipices rang aloud; 40  
 The leafless trees and every icy crag  
 Tinkled like iron; while far-distant hills  
 Into the tumult sent an alien sound  
 Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars,  
 Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west 45  
 The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired  
 Into a silent bay, or sportively  
 Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,  
 To cut across the reflex of a star; 50  
 Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed  
 Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,  
 When we had given our bodies to the wind,  
 And all the shadowy banks on either side  
 Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still 55  
 The rapid line of motion, then at once  
 Have I, reclining back upon my heels,  
 Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs  
 Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled  
 With visible motion her diurnal round! 60  
 Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,  
 Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched  
 Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.



## NUTTING.

——It seems a day

(I speak of one from many singled out)  
 One of those heavenly days that cannot die ;  
 When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,  
 I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth 5  
 With a huge wallet o'er my shoulder slung,  
 A nutting-crook in hand ; and turned my steps  
 Tow'rd the far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,  
 Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds,  
 Which for that service had been husbanded, 10  
 By exhortation of my frugal Dame—  
 Motly accoutrement, of power to smile  
 At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—and, in truth,  
 More ragged than need was ! O'er pathless rocks,  
 Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets, 15  
 Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook  
 Unvisited, where not a broken bough  
 Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign  
 Of devastation ; but the hazels rose  
 Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung, 20  
 A virgin scene !—A little while I stood,  
 Breathing with such suppression of the heart  
 As joy delights in ; and, with wise restraint,  
 Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed  
 The banquet ;—or beneath the trees I sate 25  
 Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played ;  
 A temper known to those who, after long  
 And weary expectation, have been blest  
 With sudden happiness beyond all hope.  
 Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves 30  
 The violets of five seasons re-appear  
 And fade, unseen by any human eye ;

Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on  
 Forever ; and I saw the sparkling foam,  
 And—with my cheek on one of those green stones 35  
 That, fleeced with moss, **under the shady trees.**  
 Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep—  
 I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,  
 In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay  
 Tribute to ease ; and, of its joy secure, 40  
 The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,  
 Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones.  
**And on the vacant air.** Then up I rose,  
 And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash  
 And merciless ravage : and the shady nook 45  
 Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,  
 Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up  
 Their quiet being : and, unless I now  
 Confound my present feeling with the past,  
 Ere from the mutilated bower I turned 50  
 Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,  
 I felt a sense of pain when I beheld  
 The silent trees and saw the intruding sky.—  
 Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades  
 In gentleness of heart , with gentle hand 55  
 Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

## MICHAEL.

## A PASTORAL POEM.

If from the public way you turn your steps  
 Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,  
 You will suppose that with an upright path  
 Your feet must struggle ; in such bold ascent  
 The pastoral mountains front you, face to face. 5  
 But, courage ! for around that boisterous brook  
 The mountains have all opened out themselves,  
 And made a hidden valley of their own.  
 No habitation can be seen ; but they  
 Who journey thither find themselves alone 10  
 With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites  
 That overhead are sailing in the sky  
 It is, in truth, an utter solitude ;  
 Nor should I have made mention of this Dell  
 But for one object which you might pass by, 15  
 Might see and notice not. Beside the brook  
 Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones :  
 (And to that simple object appertains,  
 A story)—unenriched with strange events,  
 Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside, 20  
 Or for the summer shade. It was the first  
 Of those domestic tales that spake to me  
 Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men  
 Whom I already loved :—not verily  
 For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills 25  
 Where was their occupation and abode.  
 And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy  
 Careless of books, yet having felt the power  
 Of Nature, by the gentle agency  
 Of natural objects, led me on to feel 30

For passions that were not my own, and think  
 (At random and imperfectly indeed)  
 On man, the heart of man, and human life.  
 Therefore, although it be a history  
 Homely and rude, I will relate the same 35  
 For the delight of a few natural hearts ; )  
 And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake  
 Of youthful Poets, who among these hills  
 Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale 40  
 There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name ;  
 An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.  
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age  
 Of an unusual strength : his mind was keen,  
 Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs, 45  
 And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt  
 And watchful more than ordinary men.  
 Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,  
 Of blasts of every tone ; and, oftentimes,  
 When others heeded not, he heard the South 50  
 Make subterraneous music, like the noise  
 Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.  
 The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock  
 Bethought him, and he to himself would say,  
 "The winds are now devising work for me !" 55  
 And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives  
 The traveller to a shelter, summoned him  
 Up to the mountains : he had been alone  
 Amid the heart of many thousand mists,  
 That came to him, and left him, on the heights. 60  
 So lived he till his eightieth year was past.  
 And grossly that man errs, who should suppose  
 That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,



Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.  
 Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed 65  
 The common air ; hills, which with vigorous step  
 He had so often climbed ; which had impressed  
 So many incidents upon his mind  
 Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear ;  
 Which, like a book, preserved the memory 70  
 Of the dumb animals whom he had saved,  
 Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts,  
 The certainty of honourable gain ;  
 Those fields, those hills,—what could they less?—had laid  
 Strong hold on his affections, were to him 75  
 (A pleasurable feeling of blind love,  
 The pleasure which there is in life itself.)

His days had not been passed in singleness.  
 His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—  
 Though younger than himself full twenty years. 80  
 She was a woman of a stirring life,  
 Whose heart was in her house : two wheels she had  
 Of antique form ; this large, for spinning wool ;  
 That small, for flax ; and if one wheel had rest  
 It was because the other was at work. 85  
 The Pair had but one inmate in their house,  
 An only Child, who had been born to them  
 When Michael, telling o'er his years, began  
 To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,  
 With one foot in the grave. This only Son, 90  
 With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,  
 The one of an inestimable worth,  
 Made all their household. I may truly say,  
 That they were as a proverb in the vale  
 For endless industry. When day was gone, 95  
 And from their occupations out of doors

The Son and Father were come home, even then,  
 Their labour did not cease ; unless when all  
 Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,  
 Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk, 100  
 Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,  
 And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal  
 Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)  
 And his old Father both betook themselves  
 To such convenient work as might employ 105  
 Their hands by the fireside ; perhaps to card  
 Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair  
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,  
 Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge, 110  
 That in our ancient uncouth country style  
 With a huge and black projection overbrowed  
 Large space beneath, as duly as the light  
 Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp ;  
 An aged utensil, which had performed 115  
 Service beyond all others of its kind.  
 Early at evening did it burn—and late,  
 Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,  
 Which, going by from year to year, had found,  
 And left the couple neither gay perhaps 120  
 Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,  
 Living a life of eager industry.  
 And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,  
 There by the light of this old lamp they sate,  
 Father and Son, while late into the night 125  
 The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,  
 Making the cottage through the silent hours  
 Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.  
 This light was famous in its neighbourhood,

(And was a public symbol of the life  
 The thrifty Pair had lived.) For, as it chanced,  
 Their cottage on a plot of rising ground  
 Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,  
 High into Easdale, up to Dunmail-Raise,  
 And westward to the village near the lake ; 135  
 And from this constant light, so regular  
 And so far seen, the House itself, by all  
 Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,  
 Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years, 140  
 The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs  
 Have loved his Helpmate ; but to Michael's heart  
 This son of his old age was yet more dear—  
 Less from instinctive tenderness, the same  
 Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all— 145  
 Than that a child, more than all other gifts  
 That earth can offer to declining man,  
 Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,  
 And stirrings of inquietude, when they  
 By tendency of nature needs must fail. 150  
 Exceeding was the love he bare to him,  
 His heart and his heart's joy ! For oftentimes  
 Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,  
 Had done him female service, not alone  
 For pastime and delight, as is the use 155  
 Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced  
 To acts of tenderness ; and he had rocked  
 His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy  
 Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love, 160  
 Albeit of a stern, unbending mind,  
 To have the Young-one in his sight, when he

Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool  
 Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched  
 Under the large old oak, that near his door 165  
 Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,  
 Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,  
 Thence in our rustic dialect was called  
 The CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it bears.  
 There, while they two were sitting in the shade, 170  
 With others round them, earnest all and blithe,  
 Would Michael exercise his heart with looks  
 Of fond correction and reproof bestowed  
 Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep  
 By catching at their legs, or with his shouts 175  
 Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up  
 A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek  
 Two steady roses that were five years old ;  
 Then Michael from a winter coppice cut 180  
 With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped  
 With iron, making it throughout in all  
 Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,  
 And gave it to the Boy ; wherewith equipt  
 He as a watchman oftentimes was placed 185  
 At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock ;  
 And, to his office prematurely called,  
 There stood the urchin, as you will divine,  
 Something between a hindrance and a help ;  
 And for this cause, not always, I believe, 190  
 Receiving from his Father hire of praise ;  
 Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,  
 Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand  
 Against the mountain blasts, and to the heights, 195



Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,  
 He with his Father daily went, and they  
 Were as companions, why should I relate  
 That objects which the Shepherd loved before  
 Were dearer now ? that from the Boy there came      200  
 Feelings and emanations—things which were  
 Light to the sun and music to the wind :  
 And that the old Man's heart seemed born again ?

Thus in his father's sight the Boy grew up :  
 And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,      205  
 He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived  
 From day to day, to Michael's ear there came  
 Distressful tidings. Long before the time  
 Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound      210  
 In surety for his brother's son, a man  
 Of an industrious life, and ample means ;  
 But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly  
 Had prest upon him ; and old Michael now  
 Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,      215  
 A grievous penalty, but little less  
 Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,  
 At the first hearing, for a moment took  
 More hope out of his life than he supposed  
 That any old man ever could have lost.      220  
 As soon as he had armed himself with strength  
 To look his trouble in the face, it seemed  
 The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once  
 A portion of his patrimonial fields.  
 Such was his first resolve ; he thought again,      225  
 And his heart failed him. " Isabel," said he,  
 Two evenings after he had heard the news,  
 " I have been toiling more than seventy years,

And in the open sunshine of God's love  
 Have we all lived ; yet if these fields of ours 230  
 Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think  
 That I could not lie quiet in my grave.  
 Our lot is a hard lot : the sun himself  
 Has scarcely been more diligent than I ;  
 And I have lived to be a fool at last 235  
 To my own family. An evil man  
 That was, and made an evil choice, if he  
 Were false to us ; and if he were not false,  
 There are ten thousand to whom loss like this  
 Had been no sorrow. I forgive him ;—but 240  
 'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.

When I began, my purpose was to speak  
 Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.  
 Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel ; the land  
 Shall not go from us, and it shall be free ; 245  
 He shall possess it, free as is the wind  
 That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,  
 Another kinsman—he will be our friend  
 In this distress. He is a prosperous man,  
 Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go, 250  
 And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift  
 He quickly will repair this loss, and then  
 He may return to us. If here he stay,  
 What can be done ? Where every one is poor,  
 What can be gained ?"

At this the old Man paused, 255  
 And Isabel sat silent, for her mind  
 Was busy, looking back into past times.  
 There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,  
 He was a parish-boy—at the church-door  
 They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence 260

And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought  
 A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares ;  
 And, with this basket on his arm, the lad  
 Went up to London, found a master there,  
 Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy 265  
 To go and overlook his merchandise  
 Beyond the seas ; where he grew wondrous rich,  
 And left estates and monies to the poor,  
 And, at his birth place, built a chapel, floored  
 With marble, which he sent from foreign lands. 270  
 These thoughts, and many others of like sort,  
 Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,  
 And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,  
 And thus resumed :—" Well, Isabel ! this scheme  
 These two days, has been meat and drink to me. 275  
 Far more than we have lost is left us yet.  
 —We have enough—I wish indeed that I  
 Were younger ;—but this hope is a good hope.  
 —Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best  
 Buy for him more, and let us send him forth 280  
 To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night :  
 —If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth  
 With a light heart. The Housewife for five days  
 Was restless morn and night, and all day long 285  
 Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare  
 Things needful for the journey of her son.  
 But Isabel was glad when Sunday came  
 To stop her in her work : for when she lay  
 By Michael's side, she through the last two nights 290  
 Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep .  
 And when they rose at morning she could see  
 That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon

She said to Luke, while they two by themselves  
 Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go : 295  
 We have no other Child but thee to lose,  
 None to remember—do not go away,  
 For if thou leave thy Father, he will die."  
 The Youth made answer with a jocund voice ;  
 And Isabel, when she had told her fears, 300  
 Recovered heart. That evening her best fare  
 Did she bring forth, and all together sat  
 Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work ;  
 And all the ensuing week the house appeared 305  
 As cheerful as a grove in Spring : at length  
 The expected letter from their kinsman came,  
 With kind assurances that he would do  
 His utmost for the welfare of the Boy ;  
 To which requests were added that forthwith 310  
 He might be sent to him. Ten times or more  
 The letter was read over ; Isabel  
 Went forth to show it to the neighbours round ;  
 Nor was there at that time on English land  
 A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel 315  
 Had to her house returned, the old Man said,  
 "He shall depart to-morrow." To this word  
 The Housewife answered, talking much of things  
 Which, if at such short notice he should go,  
 Would surely be forgotten. But at length 320  
 She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll  
 In that deep valley, Michael had designed  
 To build a Sheepfold ; and, before he heard  
 The tidings of his melancholy loss, 325  
 For this same purpose he had gathered up

A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge  
 Lay thrown together, ready for the work.  
 With Luke that evening thitherward he walked :  
 And soon as they had reached the place he stopped, 330  
 And thus the old Man spake to him : " My Son,  
 To-morrow thou wilt leave me : with full heart  
 I look upon thee, for thou art the same  
 That wert a promise to me ere thy birth  
 And all thy life hast been my daily joy. 335  
 I will relate to thee some little part  
 Of our two histories ; 'twill do thee good  
 When thou art from me, even if I should touch  
 On things thou canst not know of.—After thou  
 First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls 340  
 To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away  
 Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue  
 Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,  
 And still I loved thee with increasing love.  
 Never to living ear came sweeter sounds 345  
 Than when I heard thee by our own fireside  
 First uttering, without words, a natural tune ;  
 While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy  
 Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,  
 And in the open fields my life was passed 350  
 And on the mountains ; else I think that thou  
 Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.  
 But we were playmates, Luke : among these hills,  
 As well thou knowest, in us the old and young  
 Have played together, nor with me didst thou 355  
 Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."  
 Luke had a manly heart ; but at these words  
 He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,  
 And said, " Nay, do not take it so—I see  
 That these are things of which I need not speak. 360

—Even to the utmost I have been to thee  
 A kind and a good Father : and herein  
 I but repay a gift which I myself  
 Received at others' hands ; for, though now old  
 Beyond the common life of man, I still 365  
 Remember them who loved me in my youth.  
 Both of them sleep together : here they lived,  
 As all their Forefathers had done ; and when  
 At length their time was come, they were not loath  
 To give their bodies to the family mould. 370  
 I wished that thou should'st live the life they lived :  
 But 'tis a long time to look back, my Son.  
 And see so little gain from threescore years.  
 These fields were burdened when they came to me ;  
 Till I was forty years of age, not more 375  
 Than half of my inheritance was mine.  
 I toiled and toiled ; God blessed me in my work,  
 And till these three weeks past the land was free.  
 —It looks as if it never could endure  
 Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke, 380  
 If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good  
 That thou should'st go."

At this the old Man paused ;  
 Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,  
 Thus, after a short silence, he resumed :  
 "This was a work for us ; and now, my Son, 385  
 It is a work for me. But lay one stone—  
 Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.  
 Nay, Boy, be of good hope ;—we both may live  
 To see a better day. At eighty-four  
 I still am strong and hale ;—do thou thy part ; 390  
 I will do mine.—I will begin again  
 With many tasks that were resigned to thee :  
 Up to the heights and in among the storms



Will I without thee go again, and do  
 All works which I was wont to do alone, 395  
 Before I knew thy face. Heaven bless thee. Boy!  
 Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast  
 With many hopes : it should be so—yes—yes—  
 I knew that thou could'st never have a wish  
 To leave me, Luke : thou hast been bound to me 400  
 Only by links of love : when thou art gone,  
 What will be left to us !—But, I forget  
 My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone  
 As I requested ; and hereafter, Luke,  
 When thou art gone away, should evil men 405  
 Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,  
 And of this moment ; hither turn thy thoughts,  
 And God will strengthen thee : amid all fear  
 And all temptations, Luke, I pray that thou  
 May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived, 410  
 Who, being innocent, did for that cause  
 Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—  
 When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see  
 A work which is not here :—a covenant  
 'Twill be between us ;—but, whatever fate 415  
 Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,  
 And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here ; and Luke stooped down  
 And, as his Father had requested, laid  
 The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight 420  
 The old Man's grief broke from him ; to his heart  
 He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept ;  
 And to the house together they returned.  
 —Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,  
 Ere the night fell :—with morrow's dawn the Boy 425  
 Began his journey, and when he had reached  
 The public way, he put on a bold face ;

And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,  
 Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,  
 That followed him till he was out of sight. 430

A good report did from their Kinsman come,  
 Of Luke and his well-doing : and the Boy  
 Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,  
 Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout  
 "The prettiest letters that were ever seen." 435  
 Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.  
 So, many months passed on ; and once again  
 The Shepherd went about his daily work  
 With confident and cheerful thoughts ; and now  
 Sometimes, when he could find a leisure hour, 440  
 He to that valley took his way, and there  
 Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began  
 To slacken in his duty ; and, at length,  
 He in the dissolute city gave himself  
 To evil courses : ignominy and shame 445  
 Fell on him, so that he was driven at last  
 To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love ;  
 'Twill make a thing endurable which else  
 Would upset the brain or break the heart : 450  
 I have conversed with more than one who well  
 Remember the old Man, and what he was  
 Years after he heard this heavy news.  
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age  
 Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks 455  
 He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,  
 And listened to the wind ; and, as before,  
 Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,  
 And for the land, his small inheritance.  
 And to that hollow dell from time to time 460

Did he repair, to build the Fold of which  
 His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet  
 The pity which was then in every heart  
 For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all  
 That many and many a day he thither went 465  
 And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen,  
 Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,  
 Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.  
 The length of full seven years, from time to time, 470  
 He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,  
 And left the work unfinished when he died.  
 Three years, or little more, did Isabel  
 Survive her Husband: at her death the estate  
 Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand. 475  
 The Cottage which was named THE EVENING STAR  
 Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground  
 On which it stood; great changes have been wrought  
 In all the neighbourhood:—yet the oak is left  
 That grew beside their door; and the remains 480  
 Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen  
 Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.  
 —1800

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 TO THE CUCKOO.

O blithe New-comer! I have heard,  
 I hear thee and rejoice.  
 O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,  
 Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass  
 Thy twofold shout I hear;  
 From hill to hill it seems to pass,  
 At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only, to the Vale,  
Of sunshine and of flowers, 10  
Thou bringest unto me a tale  
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!  
Even yet thou art to me  
No bird, but an invisible thing, 15  
A voice, a mystery ;

The same whom in my school-boy days  
I listened to ; that Cry  
Which made me look a thousand ways  
In bush, and tree, and sky. 20

To seek thee did I often rove  
Through woods and on the green ;  
And thou wert still a hope, a love ;  
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet ; 25  
Can lie upon the plain  
And listen, till I do beget  
That golden time again.

O blessèd Bird ! the earth we pace  
Again appears to be 30  
An unsubstantial faery place,  
That is fit home for Thee !

—1802

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### TO THE DAISY.

Bright Flower ! whose home is everywhere !  
Bold in maternal Nature's care,  
And all the long year through the heir  
Of joy or sorrow ;

Methinks that there abides in thee                      5  
Some concord with humanity,  
Given to no other flower I see  
The forest thorough !

Is it that Man is soon deprest?  
A thoughtless Thing! who, once unblest, 10  
Does little on his memory rest,  
Or on his reason,  
And thou would'st teach him how to find  
A shelter under every wind,  
A hope for times that are unkind 15  
And every season?

Thou wander'st the wide world about,  
Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,  
With friends to greet thee, or without,  
Yet pleased and willing ;  
Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,  
And all things suffering from all,  
Thy function apostolical  
In peace fulfilling.

## COMPOSED AFTER A JOURNEY

ACROSS THE HAMBLETON HILLS, YORKSHIRE.

Dark and more dark the shades of evening fell ;  
 The wished-for point was reached—but at an hour  
 When little could be gained from that rich dower  
 Of prospect, whereof many thousands tell.  
 Yet did the glowing west with marvellous power 5  
 Salute us ; there stood Indian citadel,  
 Temple of Greece, and minster with its tower  
 Substantially expressed—a place for bell  
 Or clock to toll from ! Many a tempting isle,  
 With groves that never were imagined, lay 10  
 'Mid seas how steadfast ! objects all for the eye  
 Of silent rapture ; but we felt the while  
 We should forget them ; they are of the sky,  
 And from our earthly memory fade away.

—1802

“IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF THAT THE  
 FLOOD.”

It is not to be thought of that the Flood  
 Of British freedom, which, to the open sea  
 Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity  
 Hath flowed, “with pomp of waters, unwithstood,”  
 Roused though it be full often to a mood 5  
 Which spurns the check of salutary bands,  
 That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands  
 Should perish ; and to evil and to good  
 Be lost forever. In our halls is hung  
 Armoury of the invincible Knights of old : 10  
 We must be free or die, who speak the tongue  
 That Shakespeare spake ; the faith and morals hold  
 Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung  
 Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

—1802



## WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802.

O Friend! I know not which way I must look  
 For comfort, being, as I am, oppress'd,  
 To think that now our life is only drest  
 For show ; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,  
 Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook 5  
 In the open sunshine, or we are unblest :  
 The wealthiest man among us is the best :  
 No grandeur now in nature or in book  
 Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,  
 This is idolatry : and these we adore : 10  
 Plain living and high thinking are no more :  
 The homely beauty of the good old cause  
 Is gone ; our peace, our fearful innocence,  
 And pure religion breathing household laws.

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 LONDON, 1802.

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour :  
 England hath need of thee : she is a fen  
 Of stagnant waters : altar, sword, and pen,  
 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,  
 Have forfeited their ancient English dower 5  
 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men ;  
 Oh ! raise us up, return to us again ;  
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.  
 Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart :  
 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea : 10  
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,  
 So didst thou travel on life's common way,  
 In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart  
 The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

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## ELEGIAC STANZAS.

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE IN A STORM,  
PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

I was thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile !  
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee :  
I saw thee every day ; and all the while  
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air ! 5  
So like, so very like, was day to day !  
Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there ;  
It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm ! It seemed no sleep ;  
No mood, which season takes away, or brings ; 5  
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep  
Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah ! THEN,—if mine had been the Painter's hand,  
To express what then I saw ; and add the gleam,  
The light that never was, on sea or land, 15  
The consecration, and the Poet's dream ;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile,  
Amid a world how different from this !  
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile ;  
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss. 20

Thou should'st have seemed a treasure-house divine  
Of peaceful years ; a chronicle of heaven ;—  
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine  
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease, 25  
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife ;  
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,  
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,  
 Such Picture would I at that time have made : 30  
 And seen the soul of truth in every part,  
 A stedfast peace that might not be betrayed.  
 So once it would have been,—'tis so no more ;  
 I have submitted to a new control :  
 A power is gone, which nothing can restore ; 35  
 A deep distress hath humanized my Soul.  
 Not for a moment could I now behold  
 A smiling sea, and be what I have been :  
 The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old ;  
 This, which I know, I speak with mind serene. 40  
 Then, Beaumont, Friend ! who would have been the Friend,  
 If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,  
 This work of thine I blame not, but commend ;  
 This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.  
 Oh ! 'tis a passionate work—yet wise and well, 45  
 Well chosen is the spirit that is here ;  
 That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,  
 This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear !  
 And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,  
 I love to see the look with which it braves, 50  
 Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,  
 The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.  
 Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,  
 Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind !  
 Such happiness, wherever it be known, 55  
 Is to be pitied ; for 'tis surely blind.  
 But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,  
 And frequent sights of what is to be borne !  
 Such sights or worse, as are before me here.—  
 Not without hope we suffer and we mourn. 60

## AFTER-THOUGHT.

I thought of Thee, my partner and my guide  
 As being passed away.—Vain sympathies !  
 For backward, Duddon ! as I cast my eyes,  
 I see what was, and is, and will abide ;  
 Still glides the Stream, and shall forever glide ; 5  
 The Form remains, the Function never dies ;  
 While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,  
 We Men, who in our morn of youth defied  
 The elements, must vanish ;—be it so !  
 Enough, if something from our hands have power 10  
 To live, and act, and serve the future hour ;  
 And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,  
 Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent  
     dower,  
 We feel that we are greater than we know.

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## SURPRISED BY JOY—IMPATIENT AS THE WIND.

Surprised by joy—impatient as the Wind  
 I turned to share the transport—Oh ! with whom  
 But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,  
 That spot which no vicissitude can find ?  
 Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind— 5  
 But how could I forget thee ? Through what power,  
 Even for the least division of an hour,  
 Have I been so beguiled as to be blind  
 To my most grievous loss ?—That thought's return  
 Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore, 10  
 Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,  
 Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more.

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HAIL, TWILIGHT, SOVEREIGN OF ONE PEACEFUL  
HOUR.

Hail, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour !  
Not dull art Thou, as undiscerning Night ;  
But studious only to remove from sight  
Day's mutable distinctions.—Ancient Power !  
Thus did the waters gleam, the mountains lower, 5  
To the rude Briton, when, in wolf-skin vest  
Here roving wild he laid him down to rest  
On the bare rock, or through a leafy bower  
Looked ere his eyes were closed. By him was seen  
The self-same Vision which we now behold, 10  
At thy meek bidding, shadowy Power ! brought forth ;  
These mighty barriers and the gulf between ;  
The flood, the stars,—a spectacle as old  
As the beginning of the heavens and earth !

## TO [LADY FITZGERALD]

IN HER SEVENTIETH YEAR.

Such age how beautiful ! O Lady bright,  
Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined  
By favouring Nature and a saintly Mind  
To something purer and more exquisite  
Than flesh and blood ; whene'er thou meet'st my sight, 5  
When I behold thy blanched unwithered cheek,  
Thy temples fringed with locks of gleaming white,  
And head that droops because the soul is meek,  
Thee with the welcome Snowdrop I compare ;  
That child of winter, prompting thoughts that climb 10  
From desolation toward the genial prime ;  
Or with the Moon conquering earth's misty air,  
And filling more and more with crystal light  
As pensive Evening deepens into night.

## TO THE REV. DR. WORDSWORTH.

(WITH THE SONNETS TO THE RIVER DUDDON, AND OTHER  
POEMS IN THIS COLLECTION, 1820.)

The Minstrels played their Christmas tune  
To-night beneath my cottage-eaves ;  
While, smitten by a lofty moon,  
The encircling laurels, thick with leaves,  
Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen, 5  
That overpowered their natural green.

Through hill and valley every breeze  
Had sunk to rest with folded wings :  
Keen was the air, but could not freeze,  
Nor check, the music of the strings ; 10  
So stout and hardy were the band  
That scraped the chords with strenuous hand !

And who but listened ?—till was paid  
Respect to every Inmate's claim :  
The greeting given, the music played, 15  
In honour of each household name,  
Duly pronounced with lusty call,  
And "Merry Christmas" wished to all !

O Brother ! I revere the choice  
That took thee from thy native hills ; 20  
And it is given thee to rejoice :  
Though public care full often tills  
(Heaven only witness of the toil)  
A barren and ungrateful soil.

Yet would that Thou, with me and mine, 25  
Hadst heard this never-failing rite ;  
And seen on other faces shine



A true revival of the light  
Which Nature and these rustic Powers,  
In simple childhood, spread through ours ! 30

For pleasure hath not ceased to wait  
On these expected annual rounds ;  
Whether the rich man's sumptuous gate  
Call forth the unelaborate sounds,  
Or they are offered at the door 35  
That guards the lowliest of the poor.

How touching, when at midnight, sweep  
Snow-muffled winds, and all is dark,  
To hear—and sink again to sleep !  
Or, at an earlier call, to mark, 40  
By blazing fire, the still suspense  
Of self-complacent innocence ;

The mutual nod—the grave disguise  
Of hearts with gladness brimming o'er ;  
And some unbidden tears that rise 45  
For names once heard, and heard no more ;  
Tears brightened by the serenade  
For infant in the cradle laid.

Ah ! not for emerald fields alone,  
With ambient streams more pure and bright 50  
Than fabled Cytherea's zone  
Glittering before the Thunderer's sight,  
Is to my heart of hearts endeared  
The ground where we were born and reared !

Hail, ancient Manners ! sure defence, 55  
Where they survive, of wholesome laws ;  
Remnants of love whose modest sense

Thus into narrow room withdraws ;  
Hail, Usages of pristine mould,  
And ye that guard them Mountains old ! 60

Bear with me, Brother : quench the thought  
That slights this passion, or condemns ;  
If thee fond Fancy ever brought  
From the proud margin of the Thames,  
And Lambeth's venerable towers, 65  
To humbler streams and greener bowers.

Yes, they can make, who fail to find,  
Short leisure even in busiest days,  
Moments to cast a look behind,  
And profit by those kindly rays 70  
That through the clouds do sometimes steal,  
And all the far-off past reveal.

Hence, while the imperial City's din  
Beats frequent on thy satiate ear,  
A pleased attention I may win 75  
To agitations less severe,  
That neither overwhelm nor cloy,  
But fill the hollow vale with joy !

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TENNYSON



# TENNYSON.

## CENONE.

There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,  
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,  
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand 5  
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down  
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars  
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine  
In cataract after cataract to the sea.  
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus 10  
Stands up and takes the morning : but in front  
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal  
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,  
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon 15  
Mournful CEnone, wandering forlorn  
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.  
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck  
Floated her hair or seemed to float in rest.  
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine, 20  
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade  
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

' O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
For now the noon-day quiet holds the hill : 25  
The grasshopper is silent in the grass :  
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,  
Rests like a shadow, and the cicala sleeps.\*  
The purple flowers droop : the golden bee  
Is lily-cradled : I alone awake. 30

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\* See note on this line.

My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,  
 My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,  
 And I am all aweary of my life.

‘O mother Ida, many-fountain’d Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die. 35  
 Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves  
 That house the cold crown’d snake ! O mountain brooks,  
 I am the daughter of a River-God,  
 Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all  
 My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls 40  
 Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,  
 A cloud that gather’d shape : for it may be  
 That, while I speak of it, a little while  
 My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

‘O mother Ida, many-fountain’d Ida, 45  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 I waited underneath the dawning hills,  
 Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,  
 And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine :  
 Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris, 50  
 Leading a jet-black goat white-horn’d, white-hooved,  
 Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

‘O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Far-off the torrent call’d me from the cleft :  
 Far up the solitary morning smote 55  
 The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes  
 I sat alone : white-breasted like a star  
 Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leopard skin  
 Droop’d from his shoulder, but his sunny hair  
 Cluster’d about his temples like a God’s : 60  
 And his cheek brighten’d as the foam-bow brightens  
 When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart  
 Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.



‘ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm 65  
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,  
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look’d  
And listen’d, the full-flowing river of speech  
Came down upon my heart.

‘ “ My own Ænone, 70  
Beautiful-brow’d Ænone, my own soul,  
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingravn  
‘ For the most fair,’ would seem to award it thine,  
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt  
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace 75  
Of movement, and the charm of married brows.”

‘ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,  
And added ‘ This was cast upon the board,  
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods 80  
Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; whereupon  
Rose feud, with question unto whom ’twere due :  
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,  
Delivering, that to me, by common voice  
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day, 85  
Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each  
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave  
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,  
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard  
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.” 90

‘ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
It was the deep midnight : one silvery cloud  
Had lost his way between the piney sides  
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,  
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower, 95  
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,

Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
 Lotus and lilies : and a wind arose,  
 And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,  
 This way and that, in many a wild festoon 100  
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
 With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

‘O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
 And o'er him flowed a golden cloud, and lean'd 105  
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.  
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom  
 Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows  
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods  
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made 110  
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
 Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue  
 Wherewith to embellish state, “from many a vale  
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,  
 Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore. 115  
 Honour,” she said, “and homage, tax and toll,  
 From many an inland town and haven large,  
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel  
 In glassy bays among her tallest towers.”

‘O mother Ida, harken ere I die. 120  
 Still she spake on and still she spake of power,  
 “Which in all action is the end of all ;  
 Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-bred  
 And throned of wisdom—from all neighbour crowns  
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand 125  
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,  
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,  
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,  
 Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power

Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd 130  
Rest in a happy place, and quiet seats  
Above the thunder, with undying bliss  
In knowledge of their own supremacy."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit 135  
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power  
Flatter'd his spirit ; but Pallas where she stood  
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs  
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear  
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold, 140  
The while, above, her full and earnest eye  
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek  
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

' "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
These three alone lead life to sovereign power. 145  
Yet not for power (power of herself  
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,  
Acting the law we live by without fear ;  
And, because right is right, to follow right  
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence." 150

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Again she said : " I woo thee not with gifts.  
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,  
So shalt thou find me fairest. 155

Yet, indeed,  
If gazing on divinity disrobed  
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
Unbias'd by self-profit, oh ! rest thee sure  
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee, 160  
So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,

Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,  
 To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,  
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow  
 Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will, 165  
 Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,  
 Commeasure perfect freedom."

' Here she ceas'd,  
 And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O Paris,  
 Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me not, 170  
 Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Idalian Aphroditè beautiful,  
 Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells, 175  
 With rosy slender fingers backward drew  
 From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair  
 Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat  
 And shoulder: from the violets her light foot  
 Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form 180  
 Between the shadows of the vine-bunches  
 Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

' Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,  
 The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh, 185  
 Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise thee  
 The fairest and most loving wife in Greece,"  
 She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my sight for fear:  
 But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,  
 And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes, 190  
 As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
 And I was left alone within the bower;  
 And from that time to this I am alone,  
 And I shall be alone until I die.

' Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die. 195  
 Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fair?  
 My love hath told me so a thousand times.  
 Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
 When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,  
 Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail 200  
 Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?  
 Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms  
 Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest  
 Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew  
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains 205  
 Flask in the pools of whirling Simois.

' O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 They came, they cut away my tallest pines,  
 My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge  
 High over the blue gorge, and all between 210  
 The snowy peak and snow-white cataract  
 Foster'd the callow eaglet—from beneath  
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn  
 The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat  
 Low in the valley. Never, never more 215  
 Shall lone Cenone see the morning mist  
 Sweep thro' them; never see them over-laid  
 With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,  
 Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

' O mother, hear me yet before I die. 220  
 I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,  
 Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,  
 Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her  
 The Abominable, that uninvited came  
 Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall, 225  
 And cast the golden fruit upon the board,

And bred this change ; that I might speak my mind,  
 And tell her to her face how much I hate  
 Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

‘ O mother, hear me yet before I die. 230  
 Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,  
 In this green valley, under this green hill,  
 Ev’n on this hand, and sitting on this stone ?  
 Seal’d it with kisses ? water’d it with tears ?  
 O happy tears, and how unlike to these ! 235  
 O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face ?  
 O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight ?  
 O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,  
 There are enough unhappy on this earth,  
 Pass by the happy souls, that love to live : 240  
 I pray thee, pass before my light of life,  
 And shadow all my soul, that I may die.  
 Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,  
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids : let me die.

‘ O mother, hear me yet before I die. 245  
 I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
 Do shape themselves within me, more and more,  
 Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
 Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,  
 Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see 250  
 My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother  
 Conjectures of the features of her child  
 Ere it is born : her child !—a shudder comes  
 Across me : never child be born of me,  
 Unblest, to vex me with his father’s eyes ! 255

‘ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,  
 Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me



Walking the cold and starless road of Death  
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love 260  
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go  
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth  
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says  
A fire dances before her, and a sound  
Rings ever in her ears of armed men. 265  
What this may be I know not, but I know  
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,  
All earth and air seem only burning fire.'

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## THE EPIC.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—  
 The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd  
 Beneath the sacred bush and past away—  
 The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,  
 The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl, 5  
 Then half-way ebb'd : and there we held a talk,  
 How all the old honour had from Christmas gone,  
 Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games  
 In some odd nooks like this ; till I, tired out  
 With cutting eights that day upon the pond, 10  
 Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,  
 I bump'd the ice into three several stars,  
 Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I heard  
 The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,  
 Now harping on the church-commissioners, 15  
 Now hawking at Geology and schism ;  
 Until I woke, and found him settled down  
 Upon the general decay of faith  
 Right thro' the world, 'at home was little left,  
 And none abroad : there was no anchor, none, 20  
 To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt his hand  
 On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by him.'  
 'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-bowl.'  
 'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift that way  
 At college : but another which you had, 25  
 I mean of verse (for so we held it then),  
 What came of that?' 'You know,' said Frank, 'he burnt  
 His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books'—  
 And then to me demanding why ? 'Oh, sir,  
 He thought that nothing new was said, or else 30  
 Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth

Looks freshest in the fashion of the day :  
 God knows : he has a mint of reasons : ask.  
 It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay, nay,' said Hall,  
 'Why take the style of those heroic times ? 35  
 For nature brings not back the Mastodon,  
 Nor we those times ; and why should any man  
 Remodel models ? these twelve books of mine  
 Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,  
 Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.' 'But I,' 40  
 Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from this hearth  
 And have it : keep a thing, its use will come.  
 I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'  
 He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse  
 That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears ; 45  
 For I remember'd Everard's college fame  
 When we were Freshmen : then at my request  
 He brought it ; and the poet little urged,  
 But with some prelude of disparagement,  
 Read, mouthing out his-hollow oes and aes, 50  
 Deep-chested music, and to this result.

## MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
 Among the mountains by the winter sea ;  
 Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
 Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord,  
 King Arthur : then, because his wound was deep, 5  
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,

That stood on a dark strait of barren land. 10  
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
 Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
 'The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights 15  
 Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep  
 They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we  
 Shall never more, at any future time,  
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,  
 Walking about the gardens and the halls 20  
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.

I perish by this people which I made,—  
 Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again  
 To rule once more—but let what will be, be,  
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm 25  
 That without help I cannot last till morn.  
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
 Which was my pride : for thou rememberest how  
 In those old days, one summer noon, an arm  
 Rose up from out the bosom of the lake, 30  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
 Holding the sword—and how I row'd across  
 And took it, and have worn it, like a king :  
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
 In aftertime, this also shall be known : 35  
 But now delay not : take Excalibur,  
 And fling him far into the middle mere :  
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :  
 'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus, 40  
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.  
 A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,

Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept 45  
 And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,  
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,  
 Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang  
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down  
 By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock, 50  
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth  
 And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt : 55  
 For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
 Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
 Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
 That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,  
 This way and that dividing the swift mind, 60  
 In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd  
 Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
 There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
 That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.  
 So strode he back slow to the wounded King. 65

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
 'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?  
 What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
 'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds, 70  
 And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :  
 'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,  
 Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
 Thy fæalty, nor like a noble knight : 75  
 For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
 Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.

This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again  
 As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing 80  
 I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought ;  
 But when he saw the wonder of the hilt, 85  
 How curiously and strangely chased, he smote  
 His palms together, and he cried aloud,  
 ' And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
 Should thus be lost for ever from the earth, 90  
 Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.  
 What good should follow this, if this were done ?  
 What harm, undone ? deep harm to disobey,  
 Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
 Were it well to obey then, if a king demand 95  
 An act unprofitable, against himself ?  
 The King is sick, and knows not what he does.  
 What record, or what relic of my lord  
 Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
 And rumours of a doubt ? but were this kept, 100  
 Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,  
 Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
 Saying, " King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
 Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
 Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps 105  
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills."  
 So might some old man speak in the aftertime  
 To all the people, winning reverence.  
 But now much honour and much fame were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit, 110  
 And hid Excalibur the second time,



And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :

'What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere : 115

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,

And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,

Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me ! 120

Authority forgets a dying king,

Laid widow'd of the power in his eye

That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all, 125

Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl

Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,

And the third time may prosper, get thee hence : 130

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,

I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword, 135

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,

Seen where the moving isles of winter shock 140

By night, with noises of the northern sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :

But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him 145

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.  
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :  
' Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ?' 150

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
' Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems  
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men, 155  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;  
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him 160  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :  
' My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.  
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,  
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear 165  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,  
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere 170  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found not words,  
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs. 175

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,  
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, ' Quick, quick !

I fear it is too late, and I shall die.' 180

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,  
Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad. 185

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels— 190  
And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them ; and descending they were ware 195  
That all the decks were dense with stately forms  
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these  
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose  
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
And, as it were one voice an agony 200  
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, ' Place me in the barge,'  
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens 205  
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.  
But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,  
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud, 210  
And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood : for all his face was white  
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ;  
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops 215  
 Of onset ; and the light and lustrous curls—  
 That made his forehead like a rising sun  
 High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with dust ;  
 Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips. 220  
 So like a shatter'd column lay the King ;  
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
 From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings. 225

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
 ' Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?  
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?  
 For now I see the true old times are dead,  
 When every morning brought a noble chance, 230  
 And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
 Such times have been not since the light that led  
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
 Which was an image of the mighty world ; 235  
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
 And the days darken round me, and the years,  
 Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge :  
 ' The old order changeth, yielding place to new, 240  
 And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
 Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?  
 I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
 May He within Himself make pure ! but thou, 245  
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
 Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
 For what are men better than sheep or goats 250  
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
 Both for themselves and those who call them friend?  
 For so the whole round earth is every way  
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of God. 255  
 But now farewell. I am going a long way  
 With these thou seest—if indeed I go—  
 (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
 To the island-valley of Avilion;  
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow, 260  
 Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
 And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'  
 So said he, and the barge with oar and sail 265  
 Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan  
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood  
 With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere  
 Revolving many memories, till the hull 270  
 Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
 And on the mere the wailing died away.

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Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long  
 Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell:  
 At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound, 275  
 And waked with silence, grunted 'Good!' but we  
 Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read —  
 Perhaps some modern touches here and there  
 Reueem'd it from the charge of nothingness—

Or else we loved the man, and prized his work ; 280  
I know not : but we sitting, as I said,  
The cock crew loud ; as at that time of year  
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn :  
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,  
'There now—that's nothing!' drew a little back, 285  
And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,  
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue ;  
And so to bed ; where yet in sleep I seem'd  
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,  
Point after point ; till on to dawn, when dreams 290  
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,  
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore  
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
Of stateliest port ; and all the people cried, 295  
'Arthur is come again : he cannot die.'  
Then those that stood upon the hills behind  
Repeated—'Come again, and thrice as fair ;'  
And, further inland, voices echo'd—'Come  
With all good things, and war shall be no more.' 300  
At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed  
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas-morn.

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## THE BROOK.

**H**ERE, by this brook, we parted ; I to the East  
 And he for Italy—too late—too late ;  
 One whom the strong sons of the world despise ;  
 For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,  
 And mellow metres more than cent for cent ;  
 Nor could he understand how money breeds,  
 Thought it a dead thing ; yet himself could make  
 The thing that is not as the thing that is.  
 O had he lived ! In our schoolbooks we say,  
 Of those that held their heads above the crowd,      10  
 They flourish'd then or then ; but life in him  
 Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd  
 On such a time as goes before the leaf,  
 When all the wood stands in a mist of green,  
 And nothing perfect : yet the brook he loved,  
 For which, in branding summers of Bengal,  
 Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry air  
 I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
 Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,  
 To me that loved him ; for ' O brook,' he says,      20  
 ' O babbling brook,' says Edmund in his rhyme,  
 ' Whence come you ? ' and the brook, why not ? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
 I make a sudden sally,  
 And sparkle out among the fern,  
 To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
 Or slip between the ridges,  
 By twenty thorps, a little town,  
 And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,  
 Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,  
 It has more ivy ; there the river ; and there  
 Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,  
 In little sharps and trebles,  
 I bubble into eddying bays,  
 I babble on the pebbles.

40

With many a curve my banks I fret  
 By many a field and fallow,  
 And many a fairy foreland set  
 With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

50

'But Philip chatter'd more than brook or bird :  
 Old Philip ; all about the fields you caught  
 His weary daylong chirping, like the dry  
 High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,  
 With here a blossom sailing,  
 And here and there a lusty trout,  
 And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake  
 Upon me, as I travel  
 With many a silvery waterbreak  
 Above the golden gravel,

60

And draw them all along, and flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

‘O darling Katie Willows, his one child !  
 A maiden of our century, yet most meek ;  
 A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse ;  
 Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand ; 70  
 Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair  
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
 Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

‘Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,  
 Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,  
 James Willows, of one name and heart with her.  
 For here I came, twenty years back—the week  
 Before I parted with poor Edmund ; crost  
 By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,  
 Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam 80  
 Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,  
 Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,  
 And push’d at Philip’s garden gate. The gate,  
 Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,  
 Stuck ; and he clamour’d from a casement, “ Run ”  
 To Katie somewhere in the walks below,  
 “ Run, Katie ! ” Katie never ran : she moved  
 To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,  
 A little flutter’d, with her eyelids down,  
 Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon. 90

‘What was it ? less of sentiment than sense  
 Had Katie ; not illiterate ; nor of those  
 Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,  
 And nursed by mealy-mouth’d philanthropies,  
 Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.

'She told me. She and James had quarrell'd. Why?  
 What cause of quarrel? None, she said, no cause;  
 James had no cause: but when I prest the cause,  
 I learnt that James had flickering jealousies  
 Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James? I said. 100  
 But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from mine,  
 And sketching with her slender pointed foot  
 Some figure like a wizard pentagram  
 On garden gravel, let my query pass  
 Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd  
 If James were coming. "Coming every day,"  
 She answer'd, "ever longing to explain,  
 But evermore her father came across  
 With some long-winded tale, and broke him short;  
 And James departed vext with him and her." 110  
 How could I help her? "Would I—was it wrong?"  
 (Claspt hands and that petitionary grace  
 Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke)  
 "O would I take her father for one hour,  
 For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!"  
 And even while she spoke, I saw where James  
 Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,  
 Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!  
 For in I went, and call'd old Philip out 120  
 To show the farm: full willingly he rose:  
 He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes  
 Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.  
 He praised his land, his horses, his machines;  
 He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs;  
 He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens;  
 His pigeons, who in session on their roofs  
 Approved him, bowing at their own deserts:  
 Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took

Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each, 130  
 And naming those, his friends, for whom they were :  
 Then crost the common into Darnley chase  
 To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern  
 Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.  
 Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,  
 He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said :  
 "That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire."  
 And there he told a long long-winded tale  
 Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,  
 And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd, 140  
 And how he sent the bailiff to the farm  
 To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd,  
 And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,  
 But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;  
 He gave them line : and five days after that  
 He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,  
 Who then and there had offer'd something more,  
 But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;  
 He knew the man ; the colt would fetch its price ;  
 He gave them line : and how by chance at last 150  
 (It might be May or April, he forgot,  
 The last of April or the first of May)  
 He found the bailiff riding by the farm,  
 And, talking from the point, he drew him in,  
 And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,  
 Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

' Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he,  
 Poor fellow, could he help it ? recommenced,  
 And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,  
 Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho, 160  
 Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,  
 Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,

Till, not to die a listener, I arose,  
 And with me Philip, talking still ; and so  
 We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun,  
 And following our own shadows thrice as long  
 As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,  
 Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content  
 Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
 I slide by hazel covers ;  
 I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
 That grow for happy lovers.

170

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
 Among my skimming swallows ;  
 I make the netted sunbeam dance  
 Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
 In brambly wildernesses ;  
 I linger by my shingly bars ;  
 I loiter round my cresses ;

180

And out again I curve and flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go ; and these are gone,  
 All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,  
 Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,  
 But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome  
 Of Brunelleschi ; sleeps in peace ; and he,  
 Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words  
 Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb :  
 I scraped the lichen from it : Katie walks  
 By the long wash of Australasian seas  
 Far off, and holds her head to other stars,  
 And breathes in converse seasons.\* All are gone.'

190

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\* See note on this line.



So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile  
 In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind  
 Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook  
 A tansured head in middle age forlorn, 200  
 Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath  
 Of tender air made tremble in the hedge  
 The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings ;  
 And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,  
 Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared  
 On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair  
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
 Divides threefold to show the fruit within :  
 Then, wondering, ask'd her 'Are you from the farm ?'  
 'Yes' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a little : pardon me ; 210  
 What do they call you ?' 'Katie.' 'That were strange.  
 What surname ?' 'Willows.' 'No !' 'That is my name.'  
 'Indeed !' and here he look'd so self-perplext,  
 That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he  
 Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,  
 Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.  
 Then looking at her ; 'Too happy, fresh and fair,  
 Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,  
 To be the ghost of one who bore your name  
 About these meadows, twenty years ago.' 220

'Have you not heard ?' said Katie, 'we came back.  
 We bought the farm we tenanted before.  
 Am I so like her ? so they said on board.  
 Sir, if you knew her in her English days,  
 My mother, as it seems you did, the days  
 That most she loves to talk of, come with me.  
 My brother James is in the harvest-field :  
 But she—you will be welcome—O, come in !'

## SELECTIONS FROM "IN MEMORIAM."

## XXVII.

- I envy not in any moods  
     The captive void of noble rage,  
     The linnet born within the cage,  
 That never knew the summer woods :
- I envy not the beast that takes 5  
     His license in the field of time,  
     Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
 To whom a conscience never wakes ;
- Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
     The heart that never plighted troth 10  
     But stagnates in the weeds of sloth ;  
 Nor any want-begotten rest.
- I hold it true, whate'er befall ;  
     I feel it, when I sorrow most ;  
     'Tis better to have loved and lost 15  
 Than never to have loved at all.

## LXIV.

- Dost thou look back on what hath been,  
     As some divinely gifted man,  
     Whose life in low estate began  
 And on a simple village green ;
- Who breaks his birth's invidious bar, 5  
     And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
     And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
 And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known  
     And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
     To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
 And shape the whisper of the throne ;

10

And moving up from high to higher,  
     Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
     The pillar of a people's hope,  
 The centre of a world's desire ;

15

Yet, feels as in a pensive dream,  
     When all his active powers are still,  
     A distant dearness in the hill,  
 A secret sweetness in the stream,

20

The limit of his narrower fate,  
     While yet beside its vocal springs  
     He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
 With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
     And reaps the labour of his hands,  
     Or in the furrow musing stands ;  
 "Does my old friend remember me?"

25

## LXXXIII.

Dip down upon the northern shore,  
     O sweet new-year delaying long ;  
     Thou doest expectant nature wrong ;  
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,  
     Thy sweetness from its proper place ?  
     Can trouble live with April days,  
 Or sadness in the summer moons ?

5

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
     The little speedwell's darling blue,  
     Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
 Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire. 10

O thou, new-year, delaying long,  
     Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
     That longs to burst a frozen bud  
 And flood a fresher throat with song. 15

## LXXXVI.

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,  
     That rollest from the gorgeous gloom  
     Of evening over brake and bloom  
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below  
     Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,  
     And shadowing down the horned flood  
 In ripples, fan my brows and blow 5

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
     The full new life that feeds thy breath  
     Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,  
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly 10

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
     On leagues of odour streaming far,  
     To where in yonder orient star  
 A hundred spirits whisper "Peace." 15

## CI.

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,  
     The tender blossom flutter down,  
     Unloved, that beech will gather brown,  
 This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair 5  
     Ray round with flames her disk of seed,  
     And many a rose-carnation feed  
 With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar  
     The brook shall babble down the plain, 10  
     At noon or when the lesser wain  
 Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
     And flood the haunts of hern and crake ;  
     Or into silver arrows break 15  
 The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild  
     A fresh association blow,  
     And year by year the landscape grow  
 Familiar to the stranger's child ; 20

As year by year the labourer tills  
     His wonted glebe, or lops the glades ;  
     And year by year our memory fades  
 From all the circle of the hills.

## CXIV.

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail  
     Against her beauty? May she mix  
     With men and prosper! Who shall fix  
 Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire : 5  
     She sets her forward countenance  
     And leaps into the future chance,  
 Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—  
 She cannot fight the fear of death. 10  
 What is she, cut from love and faith,  
 But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst  
 All barriers in her onward race  
 For power. Let her know her place; 15  
 She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
 If all be not in vain; and guide  
 Her footsteps, moving side by side  
 With wisdom, like the younger child: 20

For she is earthly of the mind,  
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
 O, friend, who camest to thy goal  
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee, 25  
 Who grewest not alone in power  
 And knowledge, but by year and hour  
 In reverence and in charity.

## CXV.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
 Now burgeons every maze of quick  
 About the flowering squares, and thick  
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long, 5  
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
 And drown'd in yonder living blue  
 The lark becomes a sightless song.



Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
     The flocks are whiter down the vale,                   10  
     And milkier every milky sail  
 On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
     In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
     The happy birds, that change their sky                   15  
 To build and brood ; that live their lives

From land to land ; and in my breast  
     Spring wakens too ; and my regret  
     Becomes an April violet,  
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.                   20

## CXVIII.

Contemplate all this work of Time,  
     The giant labouring in his youth ;  
     Nor dream of human love and truth,  
 As dying Nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the dead                   5  
     Are breathers of an ampler day  
     For ever nobler ends. They say,  
 The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
     And grew to seeming-random forms,                   10  
     The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
 Till at the last arose the man.

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,  
     The herald of a higher race,  
     And of himself in higher place,                   15  
 If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ;  
Or crown'd with attributes of woe  
Like glories, move his course, and show  
That life is not as idle ore, 20

But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly 25  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;  
Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

## CXXIII.

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
O earth, what changes hast thou seen !  
There where the long street roars, hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow 5  
From form to form, and nothing stands ;  
They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dream, and hold it true ; 10  
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.

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## NOTES.



## NOTES ON WORDSWORTH.

**WILLIAM WORDSWORTH** was of Yorkshire lineage ; he himself tells us that the Wordsworths "had been settled at Peniston in Yorkshire, near the sources of the Don, probably before the Norman Conquest." For many generations at least his paternal ancestors had dwelt there as yeomen, or small landed proprietors. On his mother's side he was descended from an old Westmoreland family. His northern origin showed itself very clearly both in his physical and mental frame. On these were strongly stamped many of the well-defined peculiarities associated with that sturdy and sterling race, doubtless largely Norse in origin, which inhabits the northern counties of England and the Lowlands of Scotland. As the life of his ancestors, so was his own individual life closely bound up with the northern shires to which he belonged, and more especially with that part of them known as the Lake District. This covers an area of some 30 by 25 miles, and includes within its limits sixteen lakes, tarns and streams innumerable, sea coast, river estuaries, and mountains rising to the height of 3000 feet. Here graceful beauty and wild, rugged grandeur are closely intermingled. "Indeed, nowhere else in the world, perhaps, is so much varied beauty to be found in so narrow a space." In Wordsworth's time it was scarcely less exceptional in the character of its inhabitants. "Drawn in great part from the strong Scandinavian stock, they dwell in a land solemn and beautiful as Norway itself, but without Norway's rigour and penury, and with lakes and happy rivers instead of Norway's inarming melancholy sea. They are a mountain folk ; but their mountains are no precipices of insuperable snow, such as keep the dwellers of some Swiss hamlet shut in ignorance and stagnating into idiocy. These barriers divide only to concentrate, and environ only to endear ; their guardianship is but enough to give an added unity to each group of kindred homes. And thus it is that the Cumbrian dalesmen have afforded perhaps as near a realization as human fates have yet allowed of the rural society which statesmen desire for their country's greatness. They have given an example of substantial comfort strenuously won ; of home affections intensified by independent strength ; of isolation without ignorance, and of a shrewd simplicity ; of an hereditary virtue which needs no support from fanaticism, and to which honour is more than law." (*Myers' Wordsworth.*)

On the northern borders of this district, at Cookermouth, Cumberland, William Wordsworth was born April 7th, 1770. His grandfather had been the first of the race to leave Yorkshire and buy for himself a

small estate in Westmoreland. The poet's father was an attorney and law-agent to Sir James Lowther, afterwards Earl of Lonsdale. In 1778 the poet's mother died, and William, along with an elder brother, was sent to the ancient Grammar School of Hawkeshead, a secluded and primitive village in the midst of the Lake District. The conditions at this simple and old-fashioned school were very different from those surrounding boys either at any of the great public schools or at private boarding-schools. Freedom and simplicity particularly characterized Wordsworth's school days. There was neither pressure of work within the class-room nor that of tradition and public opinion outside of it, such as belong to the English public schools; on the other hand, the close supervision and confinement which usually belong to a private school, were absent. The boys lodged with the cottagers of the village, and grew inured to the simplicity of their lives. After school hours each boy must have been, in the main, free to follow his own devices. No conditions could have been more suitable to Wordsworth's temperament, or more favourable to the development of his strong individuality. Finally, and most important of all, Hawkeshead lay in the midst of a beautiful and varied country, with whose different aspects their favourite amusements must have made the boys very familiar. Their sports were not of the elaborate, competitive character of later times, but took the form of rambles on the mountains, boating and skating on the lakes, nutting and fishing. In these Wordsworth, a vigorous and healthy boy, greatly delighted. There was probably nothing about him, at this period, which would mark him out, either to himself or to others, as different from, or superior to, his school-fellows. One peculiarity he did, however, possess to a very extraordinary degree—sensitiveness to the aspects of nature. Not that he went mooning about, after a precocious fashion, in search of the picturesque. The ordinary round of daily life kept him in contact with nature in some of her most beautiful and impressive forms, and produced upon his, in this regard, receptive mind effects of a most potent and permanent kind. It kept him in close contact, too, with the common people, with the "statesmen," the shepherds, and peasants of the district; and from these two sources, nature and the life of the people, he drew the material of his later works.

In October, 1787, Wordsworth entered the University of Cambridge through the kindness of his uncles, for his father had been dead some years. His collegiate life contributed but little to his development. His character was at once strong and narrow, only pliant to congenial



influences. He himself said that his peculiar faculty was *genius*—by which he meant creation and production from within—not *talent*, the capacity of assimilation and appropriation from without. Wordsworth's fruitful knowledge came to him direct from observation and meditation. He seems, accordingly, to have gained little from the regular studies and teaching of Cambridge; nor did he find any special stimulus, as many have done, in the social opportunities which it affords. In college society his powers had no opportunity to show themselves; nor did he form any very intimate or influential friendships. Not that he was, during this period, a recluse; he took his share in ordinary college life; but at college, as at school, he would probably not have impressed an onlooker as being in any respect superior to the average student. By degrees, however, he himself became aware of his special powers, and felt the call to the poetic vocation. In 1784 he wrote his first poem, *An Evening Walk*, which was not published until 1793. Among the most important events of his external life may be numbered his pedestrian tours. Wandering, he tells us, was with him an inborn passion; and it was one in which he indulged throughout his life. In 1790, he with a fellow collegian made a three months' tour of France, Switzerland, Northern Italy and the Rhine. These were stirring days on the Continent; the year before, the Bastille had fallen, and Wordsworth shared, as did most intelligent young Englishmen of his time, in the joy which welcomed the new birth of liberty. As yet, however, natural scenery exercised over him a more powerful influence than human affairs. The impressions of this journey are recorded in *Descriptive Sketches*, a poem which was not written, however, until two years later.

In the beginning of 1791, he took the B.A. degree. His friends wished him to enter the church, but he was reluctant, although he had no definite views of his own. He lingered in London for three months, noting men and things in the keen, meditative fashion natural to him; he made a tour in Wales; he thought of writing for the newspapers. At length he determined to spend a year in France, in order to master the language, with the idea that he might turn it to account in the capacity of a travelling tutor. This stay in France had a very important influence on the poet's development. To escape English society, he went to Orleans. His chief companions there were some French officers who were, most of them, partisans with the old regime. One, however, General Beaupuis, was a lofty and enlightened sympathizer with the Revolution; and through him Wordsworth soon came to take a profound interest in the great struggle going on about him. He was in Paris

shortly after the September Massacres, and felt so deeply the importance of the crisis that he was on the point of throwing himself personally into the contest on the side of the moderate republicans ; but he was under the necessity, probably through lack of money, of returning to England. Change of place did not cool his sympathies. The bloodshed and outrage which accompanied the Revolution and which alienated many of its admirers, Wordsworth with clearer insight perceived to be not the outcome of the new spirit of freedom, but of the oppressions of ages. But when, in the spirit of the era which was supposed to be forever past, the new republic proceeded to embark on a career of conquest : abroad crushed the liberty of Switzerland, and at home began to develop into a military despotism, Wordsworth lost his hope of the future and faith in humanity. A period of deep depression followed, from which he at length, though slowly, recovered. In fact, he passed through a crisis such as befalls many thoughtful men, such as is recorded in the biographies of Carlyle, and of John Stuart Mill ; and such as in familiar life often takes the religious form popularly styled "conversion." Faith in one's own future or the future of the world is shattered, and new truths have to be apprehended, or old truths more vitally realized, in order that the man may once again set out on his life's course with some chart and with some aim. The peculiarity of Wordsworth's case is that his crisis took place in connection with the greatest event of modern history, not with a merely individual experience ; and, secondly, in the peculiar source where he found healing—not in books or the teachings of others, not in what would be ordinarily called a religious source, but in a revelation and healing that came to him direct from visible nature, and from contemplating the simple lives of the "statesmen" and shepherds of his native mountains. The poet's hopes ceased to centre around any great movement like the French Revolution, and he perceived that, not in great political movements, but in the domestic life of the simple, unsophisticated man, is the true anchor for our faith in humanity and our confidence in the future of the race.

Meanwhile, his life had been unsettled, and his prospects uncertain. Unexpectedly, early in 1795, a solution of his difficulties as to the choice of a profession came in the shape of a legacy from a young friend, Raisley Calvert, who had insight enough to perceive the genius of Wordsworth, and left him £900 to enable him to follow out the promptings of this genius. With the strictest economy and utmost plainness of living, Wordsworth judged that this would suffice to maintain him ; and he determined to devote himself unreservedly to what he felt was his

true vocation—poetry. He combined his scanty means with those of his sister Dorothy; they reckoned from all sources upon a joint income of £70 or £80 a year. Dorothy Wordsworth merits, even in the briefest sketch of her brother's life, at least a passing notice. She shared all his tastes and much of his genius. She was one of the "dumb poets." She had all her brother's insight into nature, all the feelings which belonged to his poetic endowment; but the instrument of verse she never mastered, or, perhaps, did not seek to master; for she devoted her whole life unselfishly to him. His sister Dorothy and the poet Coleridge were, he tells us, the only persons who exerted a profound influence on his spiritual and poetical development.

It was in 1796 that Wordsworth became acquainted with Coleridge; the two men had many interests and opinions in common, and a close friendship sprang up between them. In order to be near Coleridge the Wordsworths rented a house at Alfoxden, in Somersetshire, in July, 1797. The two men exercised an influence upon each other highly favourable to their intellectual and poetic activity. They planned a volume of poems to which each should contribute. The result was the *Lyrical Ballads*, one of the most notable publications in the history of later English poetry. Coleridge furnished four poems,—*The Ancient Mariner*, and three smaller pieces. The bulk of Wordsworth's contributions was much greater; and this volume was the first of his writings to manifest the peculiarities of his genius and the greatness of his power. It included the *Lines Composed above Tintern Abbey*, *The Thorn*, *Expostulation and Reply*, *The Tables Turned*, *Lines Written in Early Spring*, etc. It was in 1798 that the *Lyrical Ballads* were issued; in autumn of the same year Wordsworth, his sister, and Coleridge sailed to Germany. The visit had no special influence upon Wordsworth, whose time was mainly employed in writing poems thoroughly English in character. In the following spring they returned home. In December, 1799, the brother and sister settled down in Dove Cottage, Grasmere, and Wordsworth entered upon a course of life which varied but little during the many years that remained to him. Poetic composition and the contemplation of nature formed the staple of his regular occupations. Of the character of his daily life, the best idea is to be obtained from his sister's diaries, from which large excerpts are given in Knight's *Life of the poet*. The following extract may serve as a sample; it is dated Saturday, May 1st, 1802:

"A clear sky. . . . I sowed the flowers, William helped me. We went and sate in the orchard. . . . It was very hot. William wrote

*The Celandine.* We planned a shed, for the sun was too much for us. After dinner we went again to our old resting-place in the hollies under the rock. We first lay under the holly, where we saw nothing but the trees, and a budding elm mossed, with the sky above our heads. But that holly tree had a beauty about it more than its own. . . . When the sun had got low enough we went to the rock shade. Oh, the overwhelming beauty of the vale below, greener than green. Two ravens flew high, high in the sky, and the sun shone upon their bellies and their wings, long after there was none of his light to be seen but a little space on the top of Loughrigg Fell. Heard the cuckoo to-day, this first of May. We went down to tea at eight o'clock . . . and returned after tea. The landscape was fading: sheep and lambs quiet among the rocks. We walked towards King's, and backwards and forwards. The sky was perfectly cloudless. . . . Three solitary stars in the middle of the blue vault, one or two on the points of the high hills."

In 1802 he married Mary Hutchinson, whom he had known since childhood; but this event scarcely interrupted the even tenor of his way. He had a few intimate friends, such as Coleridge and Sir George Beaumont, and in time his writings drew younger men to visit him, De Quincey, Wilson ("Christopher North"), and even to take up their residence in his neighbourhood. But, on the whole, his life during his prime was the life of a recluse. Nor, with his humbler neighbours, though interested in their welfare, was he on terms of genial intercourse such as marked the relations of Scott to those about him. He was, in short, self-centred, wrapped up in his own thoughts—a reserved man, with a cold and absent-minded exterior. "He wasn't a man as said a deal to common folk," said one of these common folk to an enquirer, "but he talked a deal to hissen." "He was not a man that folks could crack wi'," said another, "nor not a man as could crack wi' folks."

Wordsworth was a philosopher in the antique sense of the word, shaping his life according to his own ideals, and little regarding the fact that these ideals were very different from those of men in general. He found his happiness in easily attainable sources—in nature, in his own work and thoughts, in literature and domestic life. He cared nothing for wealth or the luxuries which it affords. "Plain living and high thinking" characterized his life; his daily fare and home surroundings were but little superior to those of the peasantry about him. The only luxury in which he indulged was travelling; he made tours in Scotland, Ireland, and the continent, of which his works contain memorials, and these, with frequent visits to friends in England, were among the chief events of his quiet life. The simplicity of the tastes of the household and Mrs. Wordsworth's careful management enabled the poet to subsist with comfort upon an income which would have meant harassing poverty to



most men of his class. His works brought him no money ; but the payment in 1802 of a debt due his father's estate added something to his resources, and when these proved inadequate through the increasing expenses of his family, he fortunately obtained (1813) through the influence of the Earl of Lonsdale the office of Distributor of Stamps for Westmoreland. This afforded him a sufficient income and did not make claims upon time and energy inconsistent with his devotion to poetic work. In the same year, 1813, he removed from Grasmere, where he had resided for some fourteen years (nine of them in Dove Cottage) to Rydal Mount, at no great distance ; this was his home during the remaining thirty-seven years of his life.

In 1839 Wordsworth received the honorary degree of D.C.L. from Oxford, and on the occasion of its bestowal was welcomed with great enthusiasm. In 1842 a pension was offered to him ; in 1843 he was made Poet Laureate. Thus full of years and honours, and in that same tranquillity which marked his life, Wordsworth passed away April 23rd, 1850.

"Every great poet," said Wordsworth, "is a teacher ; I wish to be considered as a teacher or as nothing." Wordsworth has, therefore, a didactic aim in his poetry. Happily, however, his conception of teaching was no narrow one ; he did not think that poetry in order to be didactic, must directly present some abstract truth, or be capable of furnishing some moral application ; if a poem kindled the imagination, or stirred the nobler feelings, it contributed in his opinion even more to the education of the reader.\* His sense of the unity and harmony of things was strong. As in *Tintern Abbey*, we find him giving expression to his sense of the unity of all existence—the setting suns, the round ocean, and the mind of man being all manifestations of one and the same divine spirit—so he believed in the unity and close interconnection of all the faculties of man. No one faculty could be stimulated or neglected without a corresponding effect upon the rest. The delight, for example, afforded by the contemplation of scenery quickened, he thought, the moral nature ; while the man whose imagination or sense of beauty had remained undeveloped must suffer also from limitations and weakness in his ethical constitution. Therefore his work is not generally didactic in the ordinary sense, though not infrequently so ; his poetry may merely stimulate imagination and feeling, and thence educative effects will steal unnoted into heart and brain.

He was a teacher, then ; but his teaching did not mainly aim at imparting any particular system of abstract truth, though this also it

may sometimes attempt. It rather sought to elevate and ennoble the whole character by exhibiting, and making the reader feel, the sources of high and genuine pleasure. It teaches by revealing, by stimulating, by elevating. Wordsworth thought that the fountain of the purest and highest joys lie about us, within the reach of all. The child finds them everywhere :

Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,  
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway.

But as we grow older the world imposes on us with its lower allurements—wealth, luxury, ambition—which dull our perceptions and degrade our will until we become blind and indifferent to the fountains of the highest happiness and the truest culture. To these, it is Wordsworth's aim in his poetry to lead us back.

The sources of this happiness and this higher culture the poet had in his own personal experiences, when his heart was sick and his beliefs shattered, found in nature, in the homely round of ordinary duties, in the domestic affections, in the contemplation of the life of men in its simplest and most natural form among the peasantry of his native mountains. These things, accordingly, are what he depicts to us in his poems ; they afford his poetic material ; and with all these things his life fitted him to deal. They are not, however, present simply and for their own sakes, as in the more purely artistic work of Shakespeare or Scott. Wordsworth had a strongly meditative and reflective bent ; what he saw and felt, he naturally made the basis of thought. He was not carried away by his joys and sorrows, as Burns and Shelley. His temperament was cool and self-contained, not emotional and impetuous. Nor was he markedly sympathetic, forgetting himself in the life of others. So his poetry neither gives expression simply to feeling, nor does it afford purely objective pictures of men and women ; it uses these things as material or stimulus to thought. Wordsworth does not forthwith set down what he has felt or seen ; he broods over it and shapes it to moral rather than artistic ends. He is not passionate or animated ; his poems appeal, not to the active and impetuous man, but to the contemplative and thoughtful—to age rather than to youth.

One merit he specially claimed for himself, that he kept " his eye on the subject." Nothing in the poets who preceded him irritated him more than their inaccuracies (for example, in the delineation of natural scenes), their conscious sacrifice of truth for the sake of what they considered poetic effect, as exemplified, for instance, in their pastoral poetry. The



same spirit which demanded truth in matter called for simplicity and directness in style. He aimed at keeping the reader's eye also on the subject, and did not blur the clearness of the outline of his theme for the sake of the charm of ornament and of technical display. Hence, his style, at its best, is marvellously direct, chaste, and effective ; and, at its worst, tends to prosaic baldness and triviality. So simple, so free from every needless excrescence, so perfectly adapted to the thought, is Wordsworth's expression in his happier moments, that Matthew Arnold has affirmed that he has no style, *i.e.*, the words are so perfectly appropriate that they seem to come from the object not from the writer. "Nature herself seems," says Matthew Arnold, "to take the pen out of his hand, and to write for him with her own bare, sheer, penetrating power. This arises from two causes ; from the profound sincerity with which Wordsworth feels his subjects, and also from the profoundly sincere and natural character of the subject itself. He can and will treat such a subject with nothing but the most plain, first-hand, almost austere naturalness."

In conclusion, two or three great services of Wordsworth as a poet may be enumerated. He opened the eyes of his own generation and still continues, in a less degree, to open the eyes of readers of the present day to the beauties of nature, and to the fund of consolation and joy that may there be found. He showed that we do not need to go to distant lands and remote ages for poetic material, that poetry lies about us, in our own age, in ordinary life, in commonplace men and women. And he overthrew the stilted conventional style of the poetry which was in the ascendant, and showed that the highest poetry might be simple, direct, and plain.

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## INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS.

Written in 1799 ; first published in Coleridge's periodical, *The Friend*, for December 28th, 1809, where it follows Coleridge's prose description of skating on the lake at Ratzeburg. It is a reminiscence of the poet's school-days ; the lake is Esthwaite ; the village, Hawkshead.

**Wordsworth and Nature.** Nature, *i.e.*, man's dwelling-place—the world of mountains, fields, lakes, sky, trees, etc.—was a more important factor in Wordsworth's life than in that, perhaps, of any other poet. He spent a great part of his time in the contemplation of it, and it shaped his philosophy in a quite peculiar way. In his own experience, this communing with nature had comforted and soothed him even in his time of greatest need, and seemed to stimulate and instruct the higher man within him. Such experience is not, in every respect, unique. Many persons in that day, and still more in ours, have found intense and elevating pleasure in beautiful scenery. But Wordsworth had these feelings to an extraordinary degree, and the circumstances both of his boyhood and of his later life were such as to develop them to the utmost. He possessed, therefore, very unusual qualifications for speaking upon such matters ; and, being master also of the gift of poetic expression, became one of the greatest of nature-poets. He utters for others, with marvellous truth and felicity, what they themselves have vaguely noted or felt in regard to nature ; his keener observation and appreciation enable him to open the eyes of his readers to much of beauty that would have escaped their attention. But, further, Wordsworth's enjoyment of the world about him was not confined merely to pleasure in variety and beauty of form and colour. These things which address themselves to the bodily eye seemed to him the outward manifestations of an indwelling spirit,—a spirit akin to his own, and in harmony with it. The *divine*, in short, lay behind these outward shows ; in them God was manifesting himself, and through them man might come into closest relations with God. Hence, for Wordsworth, there gathered about nature a deep sense of mystery and of reverence ; in his breast it excited feelings of a profound and religious character—far beyond mere delight in sensuous beauty. It is the emphasis that he lays upon this aspect of nature, and upon the feelings derived from it, that gives the most distinctive quality to his nature poetry.

The poem in which we find the most adequate account of Wordsworth's characteristic view of nature, is the *Lines written above Tintern Abbey*, where he also explains that this full appreciation of her significance was a gradual growth. In the poem before us, and in the poem on

*Nutting*, which follows, we have an exemplification of one of the earlier stages, when Nature takes him in hand,\* as it were, and begins her course of instruction. Through no lofty motive but in the pursuit of boyish pleasures, he is brought into close contact with some of the most beautiful aspects of the material world; these are the background of his daily life and are intertwined with his keenest enjoyments and most vivid experiences; and at favourable moments, as in those recorded in these two poems, there steal upon his boyish heart some vague consciousness of her beauty and of her power.

1-4. The poet addresses the Spirit of which we have spoken above. This Spirit or Mind gives form and energy to mere material things; cf. the passage from *Tintern Abbey* cited in the note on *Nutting*.

9. Not, for example, with the mean and perishable surroundings of the poorer classes in an ugly, manufacturing town, but with magnificent mountains and valleys of the Lake country.

10-11. Association with these nobler things elevates the beginnings and sources of our feeling and thought · cf. *Personal Talk*, continued, ll. 2-4.

12-14. Through the elevation and insight thus attained (viz., by association with what is noble in life and nature) we learn to find, even in pain and fear, sources of consolation and strength, and a proof of the greatness of human nature even in the intensity of our emotions. This is a characteristic thought with Wordsworth; it lies at the basis of the *Elegiac Stanzas suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle*; cf. also the close of the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*:

We will grieve not, rather find  
Strength in what remains behind;  
In the primal sympathy  
Which having been must ever be;  
In the soothing thoughts that spring  
Out of human suffering.

. . . . .  
Thanks to the human heart by which we live;  
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears.

41-2. Coleridge, in *The Friend*, says: "When very many are skating together the sounds and the noises give an impulse to the icy trees, and the woods all round the lake *tinkle*."

Cf. also Tennyson's description of a wintry night in *Morte d'Arthur*:

The bare, black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of iron heels.

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\* Cf. the poem "Three years she grew."

## NUTTING.

Written in Germany in 1799, published in 1800; intended to form part of *The Prelude*, "but struck out," says Wordsworth, "as not being wanted there. Like most of my schoolfellows I was an impassioned Nutter. For this pleasure, the Vale of Esthwaite, abounding in coppice wood, furnished a very wide range. These verses arose out of the remembrance of feelings I had often had when a boy, and particularly in the extensive woods that still [1843] stretch from the side of Esthwaite Lake towards Graythwaite, the seat of the ancient family of Sandys."

This selection has to do with the same subject as the preceding—the influence of nature as an educator of man. In *Nutting* the poet dwells with fond delight upon a remembrance of boyish years, when, by mere animal activity and childish pleasures, he was drawn into contact with nature in her beauty and repose; yet, even then, he was half-conscious of her charm, and already vaguely felt a *spirit* in nature, and a sympathy with that spirit—things of which he made so much in his later philosophy, life, and poetry.

The poem is in the main descriptive, and we feel that, to some extent, the poet elaborates and lingers upon the details for their own sake, and because they are associated with a glow of youthful life and the faery charm that haunts the fresh experiences of children. (Cf. *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* and *To the Cuckoo*.) But it is characteristic of Wordsworth that the poem is (1) not a mere description of nature as it presents itself to the bodily eye, but of nature as influencing man; and (2) that the picture serves to lead up to an interpretation of nature—to the statement of something which is the outcome, not of mere observation by the bodily organs, but of the imaginative and philosophic faculty:—

A sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.

—(*Lines composed above Tintern Abbey.*)

33. **water-breaks.** Ripples or wavelets; cf. Tennyson's *Brook*:

With many a silvery water-break  
Above the golden gravel.

## MICHAEL.

Written at Town-end, Grasmere, 1800. In Dorothy Wordsworth's journal, under date Oct. 11 of that year, occurs the entry : " We walked up Green-head Ghyll in search of a sheepfold. . . . The sheepfold is falling away. It is built nearly in the form of a heart unequally divided." In the diary there follow numerous references to Wordsworth's working upon the poem, usually at the sheepfold. On Dec. 9, there is the entry : " W. finished his poem to-day," the reference being probably to *Michael*. *Michael* was included in the edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* dated 1800, but actually published in Jan. 1801.

" The character and circumstances of Luke," said Wordsworth, " were taken from a family to whom had belonged, many years before, the house we lived in at Town-end, along with some fields and woodlands on the eastern shore of Grasmere." On another occasion he said : " *Michael* was founded on the son of an old couple having become dissolute, and run away from his parents ; and on an old shepherd having been seven years in building up a sheepfold in a solitary valley." On April 9, 1801, Wordsworth wrote to his friend Thomas Poole : " In writing [*Michael*], I had your character often before my eyes, and sometimes thought that I was delineating such a man as you yourself would have been, under the same circumstances ;" again, " I have attempted to give a picture of a man of strong mind and lively sensibility, agitated by two of the most powerful affections of the human heart,—parental affection and the love of property, *landed* property, including the feelings of inheritance, home, and personal and family independence." To Charles James Fox he wrote : " In the two poems, *The Brothers* and *Michael*, I have attempted to draw a picture of the domestic affections, as I know they exist among a class of men who are now almost confined to the north of England. They are small independent *proprietors* of land, here called 'statesmen,' men of respectable education, who daily labour on their own little properties. The domestic affections will always be strong amongst men who live in a country not crowded with population ; if these men are placed above poverty. But, if they are proprietors of small estates which have descended to them from their ancestors, the power which these affections will acquire amongst such men, is inconceivable by those who have only had an opportunity of observing hired labourers, farmers and the manufacturing poor. Their little tract of land serves as a kind of permanent rallying point for their domestic feelings, as a tablet on which they are written, which makes them objects of memory in a thousand instances, when they would



otherwise be forgotten. . . . The two poems that I have mentioned were written with a view to show that men who do not wear fine clothes can feel deeply. . . . The poems are faithful copies from nature ; and I hope whatever effect they may have upon you, you will at least be able to perceive that they may excite profitable sympathies in many kind and good hearts ; and may in some small degree enlarge our feelings of reverence for our species, and our knowledge of human nature, by showing that our best qualities are possessed by men whom we are too apt to consider, not with reference to the points in which they resemble us, but to those in which they manifestly differ from us."

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**Wordsworth and man.**—We have had several examples of Wordsworth's attitude towards nature, and of the poetic use that he makes of the material derived thence. But Wordsworth's poetry also treats of man and human life, and in this sphere, as in the other, his work presents marked peculiarities. In contrast with the majority of poets, and especially in contrast with the school of poets who had been dominant in England during the greater part of the century, Wordsworth takes his themes from humble, rustic, commonplace life. He thus, at once, abandons the advantages which a dignified or romantic theme, or one which treats of remote times and places, yields. Those very sources of charm which lie upon the surface in the case of *The Ancient Mariner* or of *The Lady of the Lake*—varied and romantic incidents, picturesque manners and costume, plot interest, the stimulus of mystery and curiosity—are usually, as in *Michael*, excluded by the poet's very selection of subject. Nor does he attempt to introduce these attractions in any adventitious way, to invest his poems by his style and treatment with some of these qualities which do not naturally accompany his theme.\* What then are the sources of his poetic power? What is it that makes such a poem as *Michael* a work of extraordinary beauty and charm?

There are two main points which should be noted in the poem before us as particularly distinctive of Wordsworth's genius and art. (1) He chooses his theme for the nobility, intensity, and beauty of the emotion involved, not because of the strikingness of the external facts that form the environment of this emotion. In this respect he is unlike Scott ; he cares nothing for picturesque personages and events, provided he finds a subject which presents some noble, affecting, important truth of human

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\* As Tennyson occasionally does, e.g., in *Enoch Arden*, which affords a very interesting parallel and contrast to *Michael*.



nature. So in *Michael* the fatherly love which is the centre of the whole is a beautiful and noble trait of human nature in whatever surroundings exhibited ; and its tragic disappointment is naturally fitted to awaken intense sympathy in the reader. Evidently these are two great merits—even perhaps the greatest—that a poetic theme could have ; so great, at least, that the poet is able to dispense with many of the more superficial attractions which a romantic poem such as *The Lady of the Lake* affords. Wordsworth, accordingly, neglecting all adventitious and external ornaments, give his whole energy to bringing this fatherly love home to our own hearts and sympathies. If the student will examine the poem from this point of view, he will see that it has a unity which *The Lady of the Lake* cannot boast ; every portion contributes something to make us feel and understand how tender and deep was Michael's love, or else to comprehend that other feeling—Michael's profound attachment to his home and property—which is also essential as leading to the boy's departure from home, and to the tragic conclusion of the story.

(2) The second point to be specially noted is that the poet does not present the series of events simply for their own sake, as Scott and as Shakespeare do ; but that, further, although in a very unobtrusive fashion, he teaches a lesson. (See p. 71 above.) He himself, in his meditative fashion, has found illumination and solace in this simple tale ; he weaves his feeling and his thought through the whole texture of the work and brings it home, if unobtrusively, yet none the less effectively, to the reader. The truth that Wordsworth drew from this picture of humble life, the feeling which it aroused in him, was that of the innate dignity and worth of human nature ; and through the poem he intensifies our sense of reverence for the race, our hopes for the future of mankind. It is noteworthy that though the story is a sad one, the effect of the poem is not depressing—quite the contrary. We are touched and subdued, not harrowed, as by the wretched sensational realism of so much of our present day literature ; we hear

The still, sad music of humanity  
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue.

Nor is this a chance peculiarity of *Michael* ; it is a pervading note in Wordsworth's philosophy and poetry. The great event of Wordsworth's life was the crisis produced by the French Revolution. (See p. 97 above.) In emerging from this he discovered sources of happiness and consolation open to all, which raised him from the depth of dejection

and pessimism to a permanent level of cheerfulness, and sometimes to heights of ecstatic joy. To reveal these sources of happiness to mankind was his chosen task. And so, whether he treats of nature or of man, Wordsworth is eminently the consoler. "Wordsworth's poetry is great," says Matthew Arnold, "because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it. The source of joy from which he thus draws is the truest and most unfailing source of joy accessible to man. It is also accessible universally. Wordsworth brings us, therefore, according to his own strong and characteristic line, word

Of joy in widest commonalty spread.

Here is an immense advantage for a poet. Wordsworth tells us of what all seek, and tells us of it at its truest and best source, and yet a source where all may go and draw for it."

From this point of view at which we now are, it will be noted that the selection of humble personages and humble life is a positive advantage, because fine feeling and fine character in a situation where the casual advantage of the few—wealth, high culture, etc.—are absent, seem to inhere in human nature itself, and do not seem to be the outcome of surroundings. Note also that here, in some measure, as in *The Lady of the Lake*, we have a picture of manners, customs, and life as developed by special circumstances in a particular locality. But in the case of Scott, the introduction of this element has its ground in the picturesqueness of the life depicted, in its remoteness and romantic character; in the case of Wordsworth, in the fact that the simple, wholesome manner of life is a pleasing spectacle in itself and begets cheering views as to the actual and possible development of the finer elements of human nature under quite attainable conditions. If the picture is poetical, it is poetical because the homely details are ennobled (as they would equally be in real life) by elevation of character and feeling in the person concerned. The only accessory in the poem possessing external beauty, is the scenery of mountain, glen, and storm which forms the background of the human interest. But this, too, is of the essence of the story, because, in the first place, it forms the actual surroundings of the North-country shepherd whose life the poet is realistically depicting; and in the second place, because, according to Wordsworth's belief, some of the essential traits of Michael's character are in part due to the influence of this impressive scene. Michael has

been educated, as Wordsworth describes himself as being educated, by mountains, and storm, and sky.\* So that the landscape is also an essential of the situation. Again we have a contrast with Scott; he describes the scenery of the Trosachs, merely on account of its beauty, as part of the picture for the sensuous imagination. Such set descriptions as are to be found in Scott's poem, are wholly absent from *Michael*; nature is only introduced as influencing man, and as explaining the action.

Since the main effects, then, of the poem depend upon the intensity of the sympathy aroused in the reader by the central emotion, and upon his belief in the possible existence of such persons, feelings and situations, it is evidently incumbent upon the poet that he should be realistic and should avoid fanciful, idyllic beauties such as are to be found in *The Lady of the Lake*. Accordingly, Wordsworth keeps close to actual facts; he shuns no bare or homely detail of simple shepherd life; he adds no borrowed charm from poetic fancy. There is none of the improbable prettiness of Tennyson's *May Queen*.

In unison with the simplicity of the theme and the realistic sincerity of the treatment, the style is simple and direct, sometimes even to the verge of baldness. There is no needless ornament, no seeking for archaic or distinctively poetical language, yet there is no banality or childish simplicity. Wordsworth's expression, here as elsewhere, is marked by directness, sincerity and aptness, accompanied by dignity, beauty and harmony to a degree unsurpassed in the English language. "Nature herself," as Matthew Arnold says, "seems to take the pen out of his hand and write for him, with her bare, sheer penetrating power."

2. **Ghyll.** "In the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland, a short and, for the most part, a steep narrow valley with a stream running through it." (*Wordsworth*.)

51. **subterraneous music.** "I am not sure that I understand this aright. Does it mean the sound of the wind under overhanging cliffs and in hollows of the hills?" (*Dowden*.)

115. **utensil.** The stress is on the first syllable—a pronunciation now almost obsolete.

133. **with large prospect.** Cf. *Paradise Lost*, IV, 142-4:

Yet higher than their tops  
The verdurous wall of Paradise upsprung,  
Which to our general Sire gave prospect large.

**Dunmail-Raise.** The pass from Grasmere to Keswick.

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\* See opening of *Influence of Natural Objects*.

169. **Clipping Tree.** "Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing." (*Wordsworth's note.*)

258. "The story alluded to here is well known in the country. The chapel is called Ings Chapel, and is on the right hand side of the road leading from Kendal to Ambleside." (*Wordsworth's note.*)

283. "There is a slight inconsistency here. The conversation is represented as taking place in the evening (see l. 227)." (*Knight.*)

298. Often distinction is given to a passage by a reminiscence, half unconscious it may be, of Scriptural language; here, for example, is a suggestion of the touching speech of Judah to Joseph (see *Genesis*, xliv, especially vv. 22 and 31).

324. **a Sheepfold.** "It may be proper to inform some readers that a sheepfold in these mountains is an unroofed building of stone walls, with different divisions. It is generally placed by the side of a brook, for the convenience of washing the sheep; but it is also useful as a shelter for them, and as a place to drive them into, to enable the shepherds conveniently to single out one or more for any particular purpose." (*Wordsworth's note.*)

414-15. After the fashion recorded in Scripture, the covenant is ratified by an external sign; cf. *Genesis*, ix, 13: "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth;" *Exodus*, xxxi, 16: "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant;" and *I Samuel*, xviii, 3-4: "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, and Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David," etc.

448. Notice how Wordsworth passes lightly over the crisis of anguish and sorrow (as he does also at l. 425) instead of harrowing the feelings by detailing it; the first word here is of *comfort*, not of sorrow, that springs from strength of love. This is characteristic of Wordsworth's attitude. Cheerfulness is with him a duty, a mark of a wholesome nature, the frame of mind needful for the attainment of truth. (Cf. *The Tables Turned*, l. 20.) Wordsworth would fain believe that in the world there is nothing in which there is not an over-balance of good; if there is such an experience, he certainly shuns presenting it in his poetry.



## TO THE CUCKOO.

According to Wordsworth himself, this poem was composed in the orchard at Town-end, Grasmere, 1804 ; but entries in his sister Dorothy's journal indicate that it was written in March 23-26, 1802. It was first published in 1807.

As in the case of the *Green Linnet* (see note p. 151), the bird is not the theme of the poem ; here, however, it is the occasion. Certain peculiarities of the cuckoo, sufficiently indicated by the poet, make it suggestive to the childish mind, of the unknown and vague. Most of us can look back on some place or scene, pregnant for our childish minds with vague possibilities of beauty and adventure. In those days there is an interest and freshness about life which gradually vanishes as we grow older. This sense of poetry and romance was abnormally strong in the child Wordsworth. He refers to it repeatedly in his poetry, especially in the *Immortality Ode* and in *Tintern Abbey*, and in the former poem has chosen to suggest a mystical explanation of it.

Of this ideal world in which the mind of the imaginative boy Wordsworth dwells much, the cuckoo became the symbol ; and now, in mature years, as the poet listens to its familiar cry, a two-fold stimulus is given to his feelings : first, through the associations with boyhood and its happiness ; second, through the associations with the ideal and the life of imagination.

18-24. The cuckoo is a shy and restless bird, not easily seen.

31. **faery.** A variant of the more usual word *fairy* ; the form *faery* is connected with Spenser's great poem, and is here specially appropriate as suggesting his meaning of the word pertaining to the region of the ideal and of imagination ; whereas *fairy* is rather suggestive of the more trivial ideas connected with the fanciful beings of childish story.

## TO THE DAISY.

This is one of three poems addressed to the same flower, which were written in 1802 at Town-end, Grasmere ; it was first published in 1807.

8. **thorough.** *Thorough* and *through* are variants of the same word ; cf. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, i, 3 : "Thorough brush, thorough brier." Cf. note on *The Ancient Mariner*, l. 64.

23. In what respects the Daisy's function is apostolical is indicated in the previous lines of this stanza.

## COMPOSED AFTER A JOURNEY.

“Composed October 4th, 1802, after a journey on a day memorable to me—the day of my marriage. The horizon commanded by those hills is most magnificent.” (*Wordsworth's note.*)

These hills are in the north-western part of Yorkshire.

This poem exemplifies a form in which Wordsworth excelled a form of considerable importance in English literature,—*The Sonnet*.

**The Sonnet** is a poem consisting of fourteen pentameter lines, and these lines are, by means of rhyme, combined in a certain fixed way. The first four lines form a quatrain (*i.e.*, a four-lined stanza), with the first and last lines rhyming, and also the second and third. The next four lines also form a quatrain of exactly the same structure; and these two quatrains are united by having common rhymes. The rhyme-scheme may therefore be represented as a b b a a b b a.\* The eight lines being thus linked together are felt as a whole, and are called the *octave*. The remaining six lines, in a regular sonnet, are not connected by rhyme with the octave, but rhyme together in such a way as also to be felt as belonging to one another; they are called the *sestette*. The *sestette* contains three, or two, different rhymes; the arrangement of the rhymes is left very free, provided only the result be that the *sestette* is felt as forming a metrical whole. So, for example, with two rhymes a common arrangement is d e d e d e; or with three rhymes d e f d e f; but the arrangement d e d e f f is not held to be a good one in the regular sonnet; because the final couplet is naturally felt as standing apart from the rest, and the sonnet loses its characteristic effect. In the regular form here described a great many beautiful poems have been written, not merely in English, but in other European languages especially in Italian, where the sonnet originated.

The sonnet, from the point of view of form, is, as compared with other poems, markedly a whole made up of parts. There is no reason in *form* why a poem written in couplets or stanzas should not end at any stanza—at the twelfth line, for example, rather than the sixteenth. In form, it is a mere repetition of similar parts; and, accordingly, it often happens that lyrics written in quatrains have no particular beginning or end; the poet keeps circling around some central feeling or thought, there is no marked development. On the contrary, the form of the sonnet, as well as its music with the flow and

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\*English poets take great liberties with the form, and in some sonnets the arrangement of rhymes is different; but the order given above is the accepted one, and is also the most usual, and, other things being equal, the most effective.



ebb, manifestly lends itself to developed thought—to the expression of ideas which start somewhere and end in some conclusion. Such thought is, other things being equal, more interesting and artistic, than thought which makes no progress ; just as a story with developed plot is more artistic and interesting than a series of loosely-connected scenes. The sonnet therefore is, by its form, suited to the expression of some poetic conception which can be briefly expressed and yet is progressive,—has unity, and development, a beginning, middle, and conclusion. As the form falls into two parts, so also will the thought. The octave will contain the introduction, the circumstances, etc., which give rise to, or serve to explain, the main idea of feeling. The sestet will give expression to this main idea ; and the character of the thought of the concluding lines of the sestet will be such as to indicate that the poem is closing. As the octave consists of two parts, so often will the thought of the introduction divide itself into two parts or stages. Again, the reader cannot but feel that the form of the sonnet is very elaborate, and somewhat rigid. So a sonnet is not fitted to express a strong gush of emotion or intensity of feeling—such as we often find in the ordinary lyric. Burns' songs forced into sonnet-form would quite lose their characteristic flavour of spontaneity, passion, or humour. In the sonnet, too, the movements of line and stanza are slow and dignified. Hence the sonnet is specially adapted to the expression of thoughtful, meditative moods. "When an emotion," says Theodore Watts-Dunton, very admirably, "is either too deeply charged with thought, or too much adulterated with fancy, to pass spontaneously into the movements of a pure lyric" it is appropriately "embodied in the single metrical flow and return" of a sonnet. As the form of this species of poem compels brevity and suggests premeditation and effort ; so we expect weight and condensation of thought, and exquisiteness of diction. And as it is a developed whole and, like a tragedy, has a certain culmination, we expect this condensation and weight and this perfection of workmanship, more especially in the sestet. If, on the other hand, there is no correspondence between thought and form in the sonnet, no appropriateness in the music, the whole thing seems a useless piece of artificiality, little more interesting than an acrostic.

We have given the broad principles of sonnet construction as borrowed from the Italian ; but English writers, as already indicated, have treated the form at times very freely, and departed even from these more general rules. One variant developed by Elizabethan writers and adopted by Shakespeare, is so marked a deviation from the original as

almost to constitute a different species of poem. Its structure is simple; it consists of three quatrains, each consisting of lines rhyming alternately, followed by a couplet. The rhyme-scheme is, therefore, a b a b, c d c d, e f e f, g g. Looking at the form of this poem, one might either say it consisted of either four, or of two, parts. In practice, the difference between the three quatrains on the one hand, and the couplet on the other is so conspicuous that the poem seems naturally to fall rather into these two parts. The first twelve lines are introductory; within these twelve lines the thought may or may not be progressive; the last two lines contain the gist of the thought, the application or outcome of what has been given in the quatrains; they have the effect of climax or epigram. It very often happens, however, that the first eight lines are introductory, as in the regular sonnet; the next four develop the thought towards the conclusion; while the couplet completes the whole. Regular sonnets have been compared, in their movement, to the rise and fall of a billow, to "a rocket ascending in the air, breaking into light, and falling in a soft shower of brightness." The Shakespearian sonnet, on the other hand, has been likened to a "red-hot bar being moulded upon a forge till—in the closing couplet—it receives the final clinching blow from a heavy hammer."

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"IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF."

Written 1802 or 1803, when an invasion by Napoleon was expected; printed in the *Morning Post*, April 16, 1803, and in the Poems of 1807.

4. The quotation is from an Elizabethan poet, Daniel's *Civil War*, II, vii.

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WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802.

"This was written immediately after my return from France to London, when I could not but be struck, as here described, with the vanity and parade of our own country, especially in great towns and cities, as contrasted with the quiet, and I may say the desolation, that the revolution had produced in France. This must be borne in mind, or else the reader may think that in this and the succeeding sonnets I have exaggerated the mischief engendered and fostered among us by undisturbed wealth." (*Wordsworth's note.*) First published in 1807.

## LONDON, 1802.

Written 1802; first published 1807. For what gave rise to this poem see Wordsworth's note on the preceding sonnet. Milton was not a poet merely but a man who in his private life strenuously pursued high ideals, and by his writings strove to foster them in the country.

## 10. Cf. Tennyson:

O mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies,  
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,  
God-gifted organ-voice of England,  
Milton, a name to resound for ages.

## ELEGIAC STANZAS.

Written 1805; published 1807. The form of stanza adopted is that usually termed *Elegiac*, familiar through Gray's *Elegy*; the matter is also in some measure elegiac from the constant reference to the death of the poet's brother John. He was drowned while in command of the East India ship, *The Earl of Abergaremy*, which through the incompetence of the pilot, on leaving Portland struck upon a reef and was lost, Feb. 6, 1805. The previous autumn he had visited his brother at Grasmere. Wordsworth says in a letter: "The vessel 'struck' at 5 p.m. Guns were fired immediately, and were continued to be fired. She was gotten off the rock at half-past seven, but had taken so much water, in spite of constant pumping, as to be water-logged. They had, however, hope that she might be run upon Weymouth sands, and with this view continued pumping and bailing till eleven, when she went down. . . . A few minutes before the ship went down my brother was seen talking to the first mate with apparent cheerfulness; he was standing at the point where he could overlook the whole ship the moment she went down—dying, as he had lived, in the very place and point where his duty called him. . . . I never wrote a line without the thought of giving *him* pleasure; my writings were his delights, and one of the chief solaces of his long voyages. But let me stop. I will not be cast down; were it only for his sake I will not be dejected."

The Peele Castle referred to is not the well-known one on the Isle of Man, but another, the name of which is usually spelled *Piel*, on the coast of Lancashire, near Barrow-in-Furness, and opposite the village of Rampside, where the poet spent four weeks of a vacation in 1794 (see ll. 1-2 of the poem). Sir George Beaumont, an intimate friend of

Wordsworth, and in his own day a landscape painter of some note, painted two pictures of this castle, one of which was designed for Mrs. Wordsworth.

4. sleeping. Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, V, i, 54: "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank."

8. It trembled. Cf. *Influence of Natural Objects*, l. 20.

What the poet refers to, is the element that is added by the artist to every object he artistically depicts; he does not represent it exactly as it is, but contributes something from his own imagination—gives a charm, a beauty, a meaning to the object which he feels and puts there, and which is not present in the object itself.

33-36. Cf. *Tintern Abbey*, l. 88, ff. :

For I have learned  
To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of humanity,  
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue.

also the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, 176, ff.

What though the radiance which was once so bright  
Be now forever taken from my sight,  
Though nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower  
We will grieve not, rather find  
Strength in what remains behind;  
In the primal sympathy  
Which having been must ever be  
In the soothing thoughts that spring  
Out of human suffering;  
In the faith that looks through death,  
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

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### AFTER-THOUGHT.

Wordsworth wrote a series of sonnets on the River Duddon, suggested by following its course from its origin near the place where Westmoreland Cumberland and Lancashire meet, to its mouth. This is the concluding sonnet of the series. He had thought of the river as ending in the sea, but on second thoughts, he sees that this is not the case. These sonnets were published in 1820.

"SURPRISED BY JOY."

This sonnet refers to the Poet's daughter, Catherine, who died June, 1812, in her fourth year. Her father was absent from home at the time of her death. It was published 1815.

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"HAIL, TWILIGHT."

This sonnet was published in 1815.

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TO [LADY FITZGERALD] IN HER SEVENTIETH YEAR.

This sonnet was published in 1827.

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TO THE REV. DR. WORDSWORTH.

Written and published in 1820, addressed to the poet's brother, Christopher, at that time rector of Lambeth, subsequently Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. The poem refers to the familiar English custom of the village choir singing and playing anthems from house to house on Christmas eve.

51. **Cytherea's zone.** "Cytherea, a name for Venus, who was said to have sprung from the foam of the sea near Cythera, now Cerigo, an island on the south-east of the Morea. On her zone, or cestus, were represented all things tending to excite love." (*Dowden.*)

52. **the Thunderer.** Jupiter.

65. **Lambeth's venerable towers.** Lambeth palace on the banks of the Thames in greater London, the official residence of the Archbishops of Canterbury.

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## NOTES ON TENNYSON.

ALFRED TENNYSON was the third son of the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, rector of Somersby, a small village in Lincolnshire not far from the sea-coast. Though in the neighbourhood of the fen country, Somersby itself lies "in a pretty pastoral district of sloping hills and large ash trees." "To the north rises the long peak of the wold, with its steep white road that climbs the hill above Thetford; to the south, the land slopes gently to a small deep-channelled brook, which rises not far from Somersby and flows just below the parsonage garden." The scenery of his native village and its neighbourhood, where he spent his youth and early manhood,—the scenery of wold, and fen, and sandy coast—made a deep impress on the poet's mind, and is reflected again and again in his earlier writings. In the parsonage of Somersby, which was then the only considerable house in the little hamlet, Alfred was born August 6th, 1809. His father was a man of ability, with intellectual and artistic interests; books were at hand, and the three elder boys not only became great readers, but from childhood were accustomed to write original verses. The life of the Tennysons was a somewhat secluded one; Alfred was naturally shy, with a bent towards solitary and imaginative pursuits. These tendencies may have been fostered by the character of his early education. He was not sent to a great public school, like most English boys of his class, but attended the village school at Somersby, then the grammar school at the neighbouring town of Louth, and was finally prepared for entering college by home tuition. Already before he had become an undergraduate, he was an author, having, along with his elder brother Charles, written a volume entitled *Poems by Two Brothers*, which was published at Louth in 1827 by a local bookseller. The work is creditable to such youthful poets (the poems contributed by Alfred were composed between his fifteenth and his seventeenth year), but more remarkable for the absence of marked immaturity than for the presence of positive merits. The breadth of the authors' reading is attested by quotations prefixed to the various pieces: Cicero, Ovid, Virgil, Terence, Lucretius, Sallust, Tacitus, Byron, Cowper, Gray, Hume, Moore, Scott, Beattie and Addison being all put under contribution.

In 1828 Charles and Alfred entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where the eldest brother, Frederick, was already a student. There the Tenny-



sons were associated with some of the most brilliant and promising of their contemporaries. Alfred formed an especially warm friendship with Arthur Henry Hallam, a young man of extraordinary endowments, whose premature death he subsequently commemorated in *In Memoriam*. In 1829 Tennyson won the Chancellor's prize for English verse by a poem on "Timbuctoo," where for the first time in his work, there is some promise of future excellence, and some faint touches of his later style. Next year his poetic career may be said really to have begun with a small volume entitled *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*, which in such poems as *Claribel*, *The Dying Swan*, *Mariana*, and *The Poet*, clearly exhibits some of his characteristic qualities. The volume was favourably reviewed by Leigh Hunt and Hallam, but severely criticized by "Christopher North" in *Blackwood*. In the same year the author embarked on a very different undertaking, going with Hallam to Spain in order to carry, to the revolutionists there, money and letters from English sympathizers. In 1831 his college career was brought to a close by the death of his father, and he returned to Somersby. Here he completed a second volume of poems, published in 1832. This marks another advance in poetic art, and contains some of his most characteristic pieces: *The Lady of Shalott*, *Oenone*, *The Palace of Art*, *The Miller's Daughter*, *The Lotos-Eaters*, *The Two Voices*. It should be remembered, however, that several of these do not now appear in their original form, and that much of their perfection is due to revisions later than 1832. This volume, as well as its predecessor, was severely criticized, especially by the *Quarterly*. But although in this article justice was not done to the merits of the volume, the strictures upon defects were in the main well grounded, as the poet himself tacitly acknowledged by omitting or amending in subsequent editions the objectionable passages. Another result of the hostility of the critics was that Tennyson, who was always morbidly sensitive to criticism even from the most friendly source, ceased publishing for almost ten years, except that verses from his pen occasionally appeared in the pages of Literary Annuals. This ten-years silence is characteristic of the man, of his self-restraint and power of patient application—potent factors in the ultimate perfection of his work.

The sudden death of his friend Hallam, in September 1833, plunged Tennyson for a time in profound sorrow, but was doubtless effective in maturing and deepening his emotional and intellectual life. The poet's sister had been betrothed to Hallam; over the household at Somersby, of which Alfred, in the absence of his elder brothers,

was now the head, there gathered a deep gloom. The feelings and ideas which centred about this great sorrow of his youthful days, the poet soon began to embody in short lyrics; these through successive years grew in number and variety, and finally took shape in what by many is considered Tennyson's greatest work, *In Memoriam*.

It was in 1836, when Charles Tennyson was married to Louisa Sellwood, that in all probability Alfred fell in love with the bride's sister, to whom, in course of time he became engaged. The small fortune which he had inherited was insufficient to provide a maintenance for a married pair; poetry, to which he had devoted his life, seemed unlikely ever to yield him a sufficient income. Yet, characteristically enough, Tennyson neither attempted to find a more lucrative profession, nor even departed from his resolve to refrain from again seeking public notice until his genius and his work had become fully matured. In consequence, the friends of his betrothed put an end to the correspondence of the lovers; and a long period of trial began for the poet, when his prospects in love, in worldly fortune, in poetic success, seemed almost hopelessly overcast. In 1837 the family removed from Somersby to High Beech in Epping Forest, then to Tunbridge Wells, and then to the neighbourhood of Maidstone. The change of residence brought Tennyson into closer proximity with the capital, and henceforward, he frequently resorted thither to visit old friends like Spedding, and gradually became personally known in the literary circles of London. Among other notable men he met with Carlyle, found pleasure in the company of this uncouth genius and his clever wife, and, in turn, was regarded with unusual favour by a keen-eyed and censorious pair of critics. Tennyson was one of the very few distinguished men whose personality impressed Carlyle favourably. The account which the latter gives of Tennyson in a letter to Emerson, dated August 1844, is worth quoting at length:—

"Moxon informs me that Tennyson is now in Town, and means to come and see me. Of this latter result I shall be very glad. Alfred is one of the few British and Foreign Figures (a not increasing number, I think!) who are and remain beautiful to me—a true human soul, or some authentic approximation thereto, to whom your own soul can say, Brother! However, I doubt he will not come; he often skips me in these brief visits to Town; skips everybody, indeed; being a man solitary and sad, as certain men are, dwelling in an element of gloom,—carrying a bit of chaos about him, in short, which he is manufacturing into Cosmos. Alfred is the son of a Lincolnshire Gentleman Farmer, I think; indeed you see in his verses that he is a native of 'moated granges,' and green flat pastures, not of mountains and their torrents and storms. He had his breeding at Cambridge, as for the Law or Church; being master of a small annuity on his Father's decease, he preferred clubbing with his Mother and some

Sisters, to live unpromoted and write poems. In this way he lives still, now here, now there ; the family always within reach of London, never in it ; he himself making rare and brief visits, lodging in some old comrade's rooms. I think he must be under forty—not much under it. One of the finest-looking men in the world. A great shock of rough, dusty-dark hair ; bright, laughing, hazel eyes ; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate : of sallow-brown complexion, almost Indian-looking ; clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy : smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical metallic—fit for loud laughter and piercing wail and all that may lie between ; speech and speculation free and plenteous : I do not meet, in these late decades, such company over a pipe ! We shall see what he will grow to. He is often unwell ; very chaotic—his way is through Chaos and the Bottomless and Pathless—not handy for making out many miles upon."

Meanwhile, in 1842, two years before this letter was written, Tennyson gave conclusive evidence of the power that was in him, by the publication of two volumes containing, in the first place, a selection from the poems of 1830 and of 1832, and, secondly, a large number of new pieces. Among the latter are *Morte d'Arthur*, *Ulysses*, *The Gardener's Daughter*, *The Talking Oak*, *Locksley Hall*, *Dora*, *St. Simeon Stylites*, *St. Agnes' Eve*, "Break, break, break," and the three poems "You ask me why," "Of old sat Freedom," "Love thou thy land." Such pieces as these represent the mature art of their author, and some of them he never surpassed. It was about the time of the publication of these volumes that the fortunes of their author reached their lowest point. The failure of a manufacturing scheme in which he had invested all his means left him penniless. "Then followed," says his son and biographer, "a season of real hardship, and many trials for my father and mother, since marriage seemed to be further off than ever. So severe a hypochondria set in upon him that his friends despaired of his life. 'I have,' he writes, 'drunk one of those most bitter draughts out of the cup of life, which go near to make men hate the world they live in.'" But, at length, the fates became propitious. In the first place the excellence of the collected poems of 1842 rapidly won general recognition ; during his ten years of silence Tennyson's reputation had been steadily growing, the two volumes of 1842 set it upon a firm basis. From that day to this, he has held the first place in general estimation among contemporary poets. In 1845 Wordsworth pronounced him "decidedly the first of our living poets" ; in the same year the fourth edition of the *Poems* of 1842 was called for, and the publisher, Moxon, said that Tennyson was the only poet by the publication of whose works he had not been a loser. Further, in 1845, the prime minister, Sir Robert Peel, through the intervention of Tennyson's old college friend Milnes (Lord Houghton), conferred upon him a pension of £200

a year. This was a timely relief to pecuniary difficulties which were at this date very embarrassing. *The Princess*, his first long work, was published in 1847. Through a fanciful story of a Princess who founds a university for women, it gave a poetical presentation and solution of the 'woman question'; but rather disappointed, at the time, the high expectations excited by the earlier writings. On the other hand, *In Memoriam*, which appeared in 1850, has from the beginning been considered one of the finest products of his genius. It consists of a series of lyrics giving utterance to various moods and thoughts to which the great sorrow of his youth had given birth. These had been carefully elaborated during a long period, are extraordinarily finished in their expression and are fuller of substance than any other of the more ambitious works of their author. No other poem so adequately represents the current thought and average attitude of Tennyson's generation in regard to many of the great problems of the time. In the year of the publication of *In Memoriam*, the laureateship, rendered vacant by the death of Wordsworth, was bestowed upon its author. In the same year his marriage with Emily Sellwood took place. They had been separated from one another for ten years; Tennyson's age was forty-one, the bride's thirty-seven. But their fidelity was rewarded. "The peace of God," Tennyson said, "came into my life before the altar when I married her"; and indeed the remainder of the poet's long life, apart from the death in the first years of manhood of his second son, is a record of happiness and success such as does not fall to the lot of many men.

After a tour in Italy the Tennysons in 1853 took up their residence at Farringford, in the Isle of Wight, which was henceforth their home, and the poet entered upon a period of sure and increasing popularity and growing worldly prosperity. He never relaxed, however, even in advanced old age, his strenuous poetic industry; hence a long series of works of a high order of merit, of which we will mention only the more important. In 1855, *Maud*, a lyrical monodrama, was published, about which critical opinion was then and still remains greatly divided, though the poet himself regarded it with special favour. In 1857, Bayard Taylor visited Tennyson at his home and records his impressions: "He is tall and broad-shouldered as a son of Anak, with hair, beard, and eyes of Southern darkness. Something in the lofty brow and aquiline nose suggests Dante, but such a deep, mellow chest-voice never could have come from Italian lungs. He proposed a walk, as the day was wonderfully clear and beautiful. We climbed the steep comb



of the chalk cliff, and slowly wandered westward until we reached the Needles, at the extremity of the Island, and some three or four miles distant from his residence. During the conversation with which we beguiled the way, I was struck with the variety of his knowledge. Not a little flower on the downs, which the sheep had spared, escaped his notice, and the geology of the coast, both terrestrial and submarine, were perfectly familiar to him. I thought of a remark that I had once heard from the lips of a distinguished English author [Thackeray] that Tennyson was the wisest man he knew."

Tennyson, as such poems as *The Lady of Shalott* and *Morte d'Arthur* show, had been early attracted by the legendary tales of King Arthur, which to several poets had seemed a rich storehouse of poetical material. About the year 1857 he began to occupy himself specially with these legends; and from this time on until the middle seventies his chief energy was given to the composition of a series of poems from these sources, which were ultimately arranged to form a composite whole, entitled the *Idylls of the King*. These poems proved very acceptable to the general taste, and the poet began to reap a fortune from the sale of his works. Of the volume published in 1862, entitled *Enoch Arden*, which mainly consisted of English Idylls, sixty thousand copies were rapidly sold. This, perhaps, marks the height of his popularity.

In 1875 he entered on a new field with the publication of an historical drama, *Queen Mary*, followed in 1876 by a similar work, *Harold*, and by other dramatic pieces in later years. In the drama Tennyson was less successful than in any other department which he attempted, and this lack of success gave rise to a widespread feeling that his powers were now in decline. Such a conclusion was most decisively negatived by the appearance of *Ballads and Other Poems* in 1880, where he returned to less ambitious and lengthy but more congenial forms—a collection which Mr. Theodore Watts terms "the most richly various volume of English verse that has appeared in [Tennyson's] century." At intervals until the very close of his long life, he produced similar miscellaneous collections of poems: *Tiresias and Other Poems*, 1885, *Demeter and Other Poems*,\* 1889, *The Death of Oenone and Other Poems*, 1892. Some of the pieces contained in these miscellanies were doubtless the gleanings of earlier years; but in others there were qualities which clearly showed them to be the

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\* Twenty thousand copies of this book were sold within a week.

products of a new epoch in a genius that went on changing and developing even in advanced old age. In the most characteristic pieces, *The Revenge*, *The Relief of Lucknow*, *Rizpah*, *Vastness*, etc., there is a vigour and dramatic force absent in his earlier work, with less of that minute finish and elaborate perfection of phrase which is so often his chief merit. On the other hand, in *Freedom*, *To Virgil*, and *Crossing the Bar*, we have poems in the more familiar Tennysonian style, not a whit inferior to similar compositions in the volumes of his prime. In 1884 Tennyson was raised to the peerage as Baron of Aldworth and Farringford. The first part of his title was derived from a second residence which he had built for himself in Surrey, choosing a very retired situation in order that he might escape the idle curiosity of tourists. In 1886, the second great sorrow of his life befell Tennyson; his younger son, Lionel, died on the return voyage from India, where he had contracted a fever.

To Tennyson's continued mental vigour in advanced old age, his works bear testimony; his bodily strength was also little abated. "At eighty-two," his son reports, "my father preserved the high spirits of youth. He would defy his friends to get up twenty times quickly from a low chair without touching it with their hands while he was performing this feat himself, and one afternoon he had a long waltz with M—— in the ball room." This vigour was maintained almost to the very close of his long life. It was the sixth of October, 1892, when the great poet breathed his last. "Nothing could have been more striking than the scene during the last few hours," writes his medical attendant. "On the bed a figure of breathing marble, flooded and bathed in the light of the full moon streaming through the oriel window; his hand clasping the Shakespeare which he had asked for but recently, and which he had kept by him to the end; the moonlight, the majestic figure as he lay there, 'drawing thicker breath,' irresistibly brought to our minds his own 'Passing of Arthur.'" "Some friends and servants came to see him. He looked very grand and peaceful with the deep furrows of thought almost smoothed away, and the old clergyman of Lurgashall stood by the bed with his hands raised, and said, 'Lord Tennyson, God has taken you, who made you a prince of men. Farewell!'"



## OENONE.

First printed in the volume of 1832; but, in parts, greatly altered and improved since. It is the first of the Tennysonian *Idylls* proper—a form imitating in general character and in style the works of Theocritus, a Greek poet of the Alexandrian period. Further, it is an example of Tennyson's practice of infusing a modern spirit into a classical theme. The latter affords a picturesque framework with opportunities for beautiful details to charm the imaginative vision and gratify the æsthetic taste; the former gives elevation, and profounder interest and significance to the subject. In the present poem the combination is not so complete and successful as in some other poems (*Ulysses*, for example) being chiefly found in Athene's speech, but the theme is brought closer to the reader's sympathies by the pathetic interest of the situation.

**Ida.** The mountain chain to the south of the district of Troas.

**Ionian.** Ionia was the name applied to a narrow strip of the coast of Asia Minor from the river Hermus, on the north, to the Meander, on the south.

3-5. Those who have seen the movements of mist on the mountains will appreciate the felicity of this description.

10. **topmost Gargarus.** The summit of Gargarus; a Latin idiom, cf. "summons mons." *Gargarus* is one of the highest peaks in Ida, some 5,000 feet above the sea.

13. **Ilion.** Troy.

15-16. **forlorn Of Paris.** Bereft of Paris; cf. *Par. Lost*, x., 921: "Forlorn of thee."

23-24. A refrain repeated at intervals through the poem, is a frequent peculiarity of Greek idylls.

27. Cf. Theocritus, *Idyll* vii., 22: ἀνίκα δὴ καὶ σαῖρος ἐπ' αἰμασσίαισι καθέβδαι (When, indeed, the lizard is sleeping on the wall of loose stones).

28-29. **and the cicala sleeps.** The purple flowers droop. In 1884 this was changed to: "and the winds are dead. The purple flowers droop," because, in fact, the cicala is loudest at noon.

37. **cold crown'd snake.** Theocritus speaks of the *cold* snake; "crown'd" refers to its crest or hood. The resemblance of the crest to a crown is the probable origin of the name "basilisk," which is a diminutive formed from the Greek word for 'king.'

38. a **River-God**. According to the myth, this river-god was Kebren (Κεβρήν).

40-42. According to the myth, the walls of Troy rose under the influence of Apollo's lyre (see Ovid, *Heroides*, xv., 179) ; cf. *Tithonus*,

Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing  
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

52. **Simois**. One of the rivers of Troas.

48. **lawn**. Originally meant a clearing in a wood, then a meadow.

55. **solitary morning**. Refers to the remoteness and aloofness of the first rays of direct light from the sun.

57. The light of a star becomes pale and white in the dawn. Cf. *The Princess*, iii., 1 : "morn in the white wake of the morning star." and *Marriage of Geraint*, 734 : "the white and glittering star of morn."

61-62. The wind carries the spray into the air, and the increased number of watery particles which break up the rays of light, intensify the colour.

66. In the fabulous gardens of the Hesperides at the western limit of the world were certain famous golden apples, which it was one of the labours of Hercules to obtain.

67. **Ambrosia** was the food of the Greek gods.

74. **whatever Oread haunt**. Imitation of a classical construction = "any Oread that haunts." *Oread* means 'mountain-nymph.'

76. **married brows**. "Eyebrows that meet," considered a great beauty by the Greeks.

80. **full-faced**, according to Rowe and Webb "'not a face being absent,' or perhaps also in allusion to the majestic brows of the Gods." But the reference seems rather to be to the fact that the apple was cast *full in the face of all the Gods*. The picture presented by the words "When all—Peleus" is that of the Olympian gods facing the spectator in a long row.

97. **amaracus, and asphodel**. Greek names of flowers ; the former identified by some with sweet marjoram, the latter is a species of lily. In *Odyssey* ii., 539, the shades of the heroes are represented as haunting an asphodel meadow.

104. The crested peacock was sacred to Here (Juno).

128. Paris was the son of Priam, King of Troy ; but as a dream of his mother, Hecuba, indicated that the child was to bring misfortune to the

city, he was exposed on mount Ida, where he was found by a shepherd, who brought the boy up as his own son.

144-150. The sentiment of these five lines is characteristic of Tennyson and his work. He is the poet of self control, moderation, duty, law, as his work is the manifestation of these very qualities.

153. **Sequel of guerdon.** 'A reward to follow,' 'the addition of a reward.'

163-167. 'The mature will, having passed through all kinds of experience, and having come to be identical with law (or duty) is commensurate with perfect freedom.' To the truly disciplined will, obedience to law or duty is perfect freedom, because that is all that the perfected will desires; cf. the phrase in the Collect for Peace in the *Book of Common Prayer*, "O God . . . whose service is perfect freedom."

174. **Idalian.** So called from Idalium, a mountain city in Cyprus, reputed to be one of her favourite haunts.

175. According to the myth, Aphrodite was born of the foam of the sea. *Paphos* was a city in Cyprus where she first landed after her birth from the waves.

178. **Ambrosial.** The epithet is often applied by Homer to the hair of the gods, and to other things belonging to them. It may refer here to the fragrance of the hair.

187. This was Helen, wife of Menelaus, King of Lacedaemen. Paris subsequently carried her off, and this was the cause of the Trojan war, and the destruction of Troy itself.

208. In order to build ships for Paris' expedition to Greece, where he was to carry off Helen.

219. **trembling.** Refers to the *twinkling* of the stars.

224. **The Abominable.** Eris, the goddess of strife.

245-50. She has vague premonitions of the evils to befall the city of Troy in consequence of Paris' winning the fairest wife in Greece.

263. **Cassandra**, daughter of Priam, upon whom Apollo bestowed the gift of prophecy, with the drawback that her prophecies should never be believed. Accordingly, when she prophesied the siege and destruction of Troy, they shut her up in prison as a mad woman.

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## THE EPIC.

## AND THE EPILOGUE (ll. 273-303).

The lines under *The Epic* were written by the poet (and are included in these Selections) merely as an introduction to the *Morte d'Arthur*. The abrupt opening and fragmentary character of the latter poem seemed to need an explanation, just as certain peculiarities of the story of *The Princess* require an explanation, and in both cases Tennyson makes use of a setting—a prologue and epilogue. Lines 27-28 need not be taken as literally true of Tennyson; it is extremely unlikely that he had written twelve books on the story of Arthur, but they do indicate that *Morte d'Arthur* is only portion of a larger scheme which was subsequently realized in *Idylls of the King*. Mrs. Ritchie quotes Tennyson as saying: "When I was twenty-four, I meant to write a whole great poem on it (the Arthurian story), and began it in the *Morte d'Arthur*. I said I should do it in twenty years but the reviews stopped me. By Arthur I always meant the soul, and by the Round Table the passions and capacities of man. There is no grander subject in the world than King Arthur." Here the poet, besides telling that, when he wrote *Morte d'Arthur*, he had the larger scheme in his mind, also asserts the symbolic nature of the poem; and this is a point to which *The Epic* and epilogue before us draw attention. The imaginary audience in *The Epic* are interested in the most modern questions, 'geology and schism,' etc., and old things are passing away. This is true also of Tennyson's real audience and the real world. To such an audience the poet comes with a story from old 'heroic times,' fashioned after the manner of the father of poetry, Homer; what interest can it have for them? The answer is hinted at, in the epilogue (276, fol.); Tennyson insinuates (modesty forbids him to put his claim openly): first, that there is perhaps a certain charm in the style (a charm which every reader will grant); second, that there is something of modern thought in the poem—it is not a mere description of external events as Homer's account would have been, but contains something of a deeper significance. In the dream (288, fol.) Tennyson gives a further hint that some, at least, of these "modern touches" are conveyed through symbolism. Arthur according to the old story was to come again; he did not really die. The poet seizes upon this to point the moral of his tale, which is contained in lines 240-241:

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways.

His hearers say the old honour is gone from Christmas (*The Epic*, l. 7), there is a general decay of faith (l. 18); the poet substantially answers: "Not so, your decay is not real decay, but change, development. The old ideals pass away, but only to give place to higher ones; the old English ideal, King Arthur, has gone, but reappears in nobler form — 'the modern gentleman'; and so we can confidently anticipate in future generations (297, fol.) a continual progress to perfection." *The Epic* opens with the lament that Christmas is gone, but the Epilogue closes with the ringing of bells that announce that Christmas still exists: old customs connected with it may indeed be passing away, but the real essence of the Christmas festival still abides. One may compare the well-known lyric from *In Memoriam*, "Ring out wild bells" (cvi.).

*Morte d'Arthur* therefore represents some of the most characteristic aspects of the poet's thought (as well as the most characteristic beauties of his style) — his faith in human progress, his belief in development, — in a slow and steady development in which the old does not pass away, but reshapes itself to new forms in accordance with new conditions.

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#### MORTE D'ARTHUR.

This poem was first published in the volumes of 1842; Edward Fitzgerald states that it was read to him from MS. in 1835, and then lacked introduction and epilogue. Again he says, "Mouthing out his hollow oes and aes, deep-chested music, this is something as A. T. reads . . . His voice very deep and deep-chested, but rather murmuring than mouthing, like the sound of a far sea or of a pine-wood, I remember, greatly struck Carlyle." Tennyson according to his son (*Life I*, p. 194), warned his readers "not to press too hardly on details whether for history or for allegory."

In 1869, when the greater number of *The Idylls of the King* had been written, Tennyson took this poem out of its setting, prefixed 169 lines, and added 30 at the close, in order to fit it to be the conclusion of the series of *Idylls of the King*, in this shape it is entitled *The Passing of Arthur*. The added lines serve to make the connection with the other idylls closer, and to bring out the symbolic meaning, which in the earlier form had not, in the body of the poem, been very prominent; indeed, *Morte d'Arthur* may, according to the feelings of some readers at least, be best enjoyed without thought of symbolism.

The source of *Morte d'Arthur* is Sir Thomas Malory's version of the Arthurian legends—a book entitled *Morte d'Arthur*, written about 1570.



The original is followed with remarkable closeness in parts, and the comparison is so interesting that we quote the whole (*viz.*, chap. v. of Bk. xxi.) :—

Ah, Sir Launcelot, said king Arthur, this day have I sore missed thee. Alas, that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, whereof Sir Gawaine me warned in my dream. Then Sir Lucan took up the king the one part, and Sir Bedivere the other part, and in the lifting, the king swooned, and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with the lift, that the part of his bowels fell out of his body, and therewith the noble knight's heart brast. And when king Arthur came to himself again, he beheld Sir Lucan how he lay foaming at the mouth, and part of his bowels lay at his feet. Alas, said the king, this is unto me a full heavy sight to see this noble duke so die for my sake, for he would have holpen me that had more need of help than I. Alas, he would not complain him, his heart was so set to help me. Now Jesu have mercy upon his soul. Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother. Leave this mourning and weeping, said the king, for all this will not avail me: for, wit thou well, and I might live myself, the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore; but my time bieth fast, said the king. Therefore, said Arthur, take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there, I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again, and tell me what thou there seest. My lord, said Bedivere, your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again. So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and haft were all of precious stones, and then he said to himself, If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss. And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And as soon as he might he came again unto the king, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword into the water. What sawest thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but waves and winds. That is untruly said of thee, said the king; therefore go thou lightly again, and do my command as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in. Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword; and so oft he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the king that he had been at the water, and done his commandment. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wap and the waves wan. Ah traitor, untrue, said king Arthur, now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have wend that thou that hast been to me so lief and dear, and thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the riches of the sword. But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if thou do now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands, for thou wouldest for my rich sword see me dead. Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might, and there came an arm and an hand above the water, and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw. Alas, said the king, help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long. Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hove a little barge, with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw king Arthur.



Now put me into the barge, said the king: and so he did softly. And there received him three queens with great mourning, and so they set him down, and in one of their laps king Arthur laid his head, and then that queen said, Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? Alas, this wound on your head hath caught overmuch cold. And so then they rowed from the land; and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried, Ah, my lord Arthur, what shall become of me now ye go from me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies. Comfort thyself, said the king, and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in. For I will into the vale of Avilion, to heal me of my grievous wound. And if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul. But ever the queens and the ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest, and so he went all that night, and in the morning he was ware betwixt two holts hoar of a chapel and an hermitage.

1. So refers to a supposed preceding portion, *Morte d'Arthur* being, as indicated in *The Epic*, a mere fragment.

3. **King Arthur's table.** The famous "Round Table" with its 150 seats. After it was named the order of knights established by Arthur,

A glorious company, the flower of men,  
To serve as model for the mighty world,  
And be the fair beginning of a time.

—Guinevere.

4. **Lyonnesse.** A fabulous country extending from Cornwall to the Sicily Isles, and supposed to have been subsequently submerged by the sea.

6. **bold Sir Bedivere.** "Bold" is a permanent epithet that is connected with Sir Bedivere when there is no reason in the context for calling attention to that particular quality. Such permanent epithets are especially common in Homer, so Achilles is *ποδάρκης* (swift footed), Ulysses *πολύμητις* (crafty), etc. In Virgil *pius* is a frequent epithet of Aeneas; in Scott, William of Deloraine is "good at need."

21. **Camelot.** See note on *Lady of Shalott*, l. 5.

23. **Merlin.** The famous enchanter; he received Arthur at his birth, and reappears repeatedly in the legends; he is one of the chief characters in the Idyll *Merlin and Vivien*.

23-24. Cf. *The Coming of Arthur*, where this prophecy in regard to Arthur is referred to—

And Merlin in our time  
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn,  
Though men may wound him, that he will not die,  
But pass, and come again.

27. **Excalibur.** The word is said to be of Celtic origin and to mean 'cut-steel'; Spenser calls Arthur's sword *Mordure*, i.e., 'the hard-biter.' In the stories of chivalry, the sword, spear, etc., of the heroes,

which often possessed magical powers, have commonly special names. In the following stanza from Longfellow, the names of the swords of Charlemagne, The Cid, Orlando, Arthur, and Lancelot are successively mentioned :

It is the sword of a good Knight,  
 Tho' homespun be his mail :  
 What matter if it be not bright  
*Joyeuse, Colada, Durindale,*  
*Excalibar, or Aroundight.*

31. **samite** is a rich silk stuff interwoven with threads of gold and silver.

37. **middle mere.** 'Middle of the mere.' Tennyson is imitating a common Latin construction ; cf. note on *Oenone*, 10.

38. **lightly.** 'Nimbly,' 'quickly' ; the word is used frequently by Malory.

43. **hest.** 'Command' ; frequent in Shakespeare, etc.

48-51. Note the variations of consonants, vowels, and pauses in this line to give sound effects in keeping with the sense.

51. **levels.** "The classic *aequora* may have suggested the 'shining levels,' but there is a deeper reason for the change of phrase, for the great water as seen from the high ground, becomes a series of flashing surfaces when Sir Bedivere looks along it from its margin" (Brimley).

55. **keen with frost.** We connect frost with transparency of the air, and the transparency of the air made the moonlight clearer.

57. **Jacinth.** Another form of hyacinth ; the name is applied to a bright coloured, transparent variety of zircon of various shades of red passing into orange.

60. Now looking at one side of the question, now at another. The line is a translation of *Aeneid*, iv., 285 : *Atque animum nunc huc celerem nunc dividit illuc.*

63. **the many-knotted waterflags.** This refers presumably to the iris which, with its blue and yellow flowers and sword shaped leaves, is so common near streams, pools, etc. What the poet refers to by "many-knotted" is not clear.

70-71. "The ripple *washing in the reeds,*" and the "wild water *lapping on the crags*" are "two phrases marking exactly the difference of sound produced by water swelling up against a permeable or impermeable barrier" (Brimley).

80. **lief.** 'Dear' (A. S. *leof*), used by Chaucer (e.g., *Troilus and Criseide*, iii., l. 596: *myn uncle lief and dere*"), Spenser, etc., but now obsolete except in the colloquial phrase, "I had as lief."

86. **chased.** 'Engraved with ornamental designs.'

103-106. Malory, i., 22, tells how Arthur first saw the Lady of the Lake: 'So they rode till they came to a lake, the which was a fair water and broad, and in the midst of the lake Arthur was ware of an arm clothed in white samite, that held a fair sword in that hand. Lo, said Merlin, yonder, is that sword that I spake of. With that they saw a damsel going upon the lake: What damsel is that, said Arthur. That is the Lady of the Lake, said Merlin; and within that lake is a rock, and therein is as fair a place as any upon earth and richly beseen."

110. **conceit.** Used, as often in Shakespeare, in the original sense of 'conception,' 'idea'; cf. *Merch. of Venice*, iii., 4, 2: "You have a noble and a true conceit of godlike amity."

112. The repetition of lines and phrases is Homeric.

129. **for.** 'Since': a use of *for* common in Shakespeare, e.g., *Richard III.*, ii., 2, 85 (see Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, § 151).

139. **a streamer of the northern morn.** A ray of the Aurora Borealis (Aurora=dawn, Borealis=northern). Cf. Scott, *Lady of the Lake*, iv., 9:

Shifting like flashes darted forth  
By the red streamers of the north.

171. **Remorsefully.** 'With pity.' *Remorse* is employed by Shakespeare in sense of 'pity'; so *Merch. of Ven.*, iv., 1, 20:

Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange  
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty.

183. The effect that mist has in enlarging the apparent size of objects is a matter of common experience, cf. *Guinevere*, 597:

The moony vapour rolling round the King,  
Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant in it,  
Enwound him fold by fold.

186. **Dry clash'd.** We speak of *liquid* sounds; *dry* as applied to sounds means harsh and abrupt. Cf. *The Voyage*, l. 10:

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,  
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail.

**harness.** 'Body-armour'—the original meaning of the word. Cf. *Macbeth*, v., 5, 52: "At least we'll die with harness on our back."

186-90. Similar sound-effects in frosty air are noted by Wordsworth, *Influence of Natural Objects*:—

With the din  
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud,  
The leafless trees and every icy crag  
Tinkled like iron.

193. **hove.** For 'hove in sight'; from *heave* 'to rise,' as in Gray's *Elegy*: "Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap"; the phrase is applied to a vessel *rising* above the horizon.

197. **Black-stoled.** *Stole* is a long loose robe reaching to the feet; cf. *Sir Galahad*, 43.

**tingling.** As if the stars had nerves which thrilled in response.

209. **casque.** 'Helmet.'

215. **greaves.** See note on *Lady of Shalott*, l. 76.

**cuisses.** Armour for the thighs; cf. *I. Hen. IV.*, iv., 1, 105: "His cuisses on his thighs."

235. Cf. Malory, xiv., 2: "Also Merlin made the Round Table in tokening of the roundness of the world, for by the Round Table is the world signified by right."

240-1. These two lines give expression to the inner sense of the poem. Cf. *In Memoriam*, Prologue:

Our little systems have their day;  
They have their day and cease to be:  
They are but broken lights of thee  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

254. The idea of the earth being bound to the heavens by a gold chain is an old one, and has been supposed to originate with Homer (*Iliad*, viii., 25-26). It is found in *Par. Lost*, ii., 1051.

259. Malory speaks in one passage of a valley and in others of an island of Avilion—mere places of earth, however; but in Celtic legend the name is connected with the habitation of the blest, and it is in that sense that the poet uses it here.

232. Cf. *Matthew* ii., 1-11.

234. **Round Table.** See note on l. 3.

263. **crown'd with summer sea.** Cf. *Odyssey*, x., 195: *νησον, τὴν περὶ πόντος ἀπείριτος ἑστεφάνωται* (an island round which the infinite sea has made a crown).

267. **fluting.** 'Singing with flute-like notes.' The notion of the swan singing before death is very ancient; it is found in Virgil, Pliny, etc.; cf. *Othello*, v., 2: "I will play the swan and die in music," Tennyson's *Dying Swan*, etc.

268. **Ruffles.** Refers to the slight opening out of the wings when the swan swims.

269. **swarthy webs.** 'The dark webbed feet.'

### THE BROOK.

First published in the volume entitled *Maud and Other Poems*, 1855. In the *Life* it is stated that "'Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea' was the poem more especially dedicated to the Somersby stream, and not, as some have supposed, 'The Brook,' which is designed to be a brook of the imagination."

*The Brook* represents one *genus*—and that a distinctive one—in Tennyson's poetry, the English Idyll. About the commonplace and realistic details of a somewhat slight theme he throws an idyllic charm—in this case partly through the halo which the past wears for the memory of the middle-aged speaker, partly through the beauty of the strikingly English background.

The unpretentious and simple narrative is relieved by touches of exquisite poetic beauty, and the perfect lyric which winds its course through the poem, blends itself with the framework in the most felicitous way and greatly enhances the general effect of the poem.

4. **scrip.** Documents entitling the holder to payments.

6. Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, I, iii :

*Antonio* : Was this inserted to make interest good ?

Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams

*Shylock* : I cannot tell ; I make it breed as fast,



The Greek word for interest, *τόκος*, means properly 'begetting.'

16. **branding.** Scorching (the word is etymologically connected with *burn*). Cf. *In Memoriam*, II :

Nor branding summer suns avail  
To touch thy thousand years of gloom.

17. **Neilgherry.** The Neilgherry Hills in the southern part of India in the Madras Presidency ; a favourite resort of Europeans because the elevation makes the air cool and salubrious.

19. **primrose fancies.** Youthful and flowery fancies ; the primrose is an early flower as the etymology indicates : *primrose* represents Middle English *primerole* (the change to *rose* being due to popular etymology), Lat. *primerula* or *primula*, a diminutive from *primus*. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, iii :

Whiles, like a puffed and reckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads.

23. **coot and hern.** *Hern* is a variant for *heron*. The *coot* is an aquatic bird that is chiefly found on still waters—small lakes, etc.

26. **bicker.** One of those picturesque words, the skilful use of which is characteristic of Tennyson. It indicates quick, repeated action, and is frequently applied to streams ; so Thomson, *Castle of Indolence*, I, iii : "they (streamlets) bickered through the sunny glade"; and Scott, *Monastery*, IX : "At the crook of the glen, where bickers the burnie"; also to light, *The Princess*, V, 253 : "as the fiery Sirius alters hue, And bickers into red and emerald."

29. **thorps.** 'Hamlets'; an example of Tennyson's predilection for reviving old Saxon words ; used by Chaucer (e.g., *Parlement of Foules*, l. 350), and in scattered examples later ; it is said that seventy-six names of places in Lincolnshire, Tennyson's native county, end with this termination ; e.g., Mablethorpe, Claythorpe, Theddlethorpe, etc.

46. **willow-weed and mallow.** The 'willow-weed' (*Epilobium Hirsutum*) is a common plant in England on the margins of streams amongst reeds and coarse grasses, as is also the common mallow (*Malva Sylvestris*).

54. **grigs.** 'Crickets.'

58. **grayling.** A fish of the salmon family which "prefers rivers with rocky or gravelly bottom and an alteration of stream and pool."

61. **waterbreak.** 'Ripple'; cf. Wordsworth, *Nutting*, 33 : "Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on."



70. **lissome.** A variant of 'lithesome.'

82. The reference is to the well-known Scotch song by Burns, "Ye banks and braes o' Bonnie Doon."

103. **wizard pentagram.** A figure consisting of two equilateral triangles placed upon one another so as to form a six-pointed star. It was supposed in the Middle Ages to have magical powers against evil spirits.

118. **meadow-sweet** (*Spiræa Ulmaria*), a sweet-scented, low shrub. "A flower which greets all ramblers to moist fields and tranquil water-courses in midsummer is the meadow-sweet, called also queen of the meadows. It belongs to the Spiræa tribe, where our hardhack, nine-bark, meadow-sweet, queen of the prairie and others, belong, but surpasses all our species in being sweet-scented—a suggestion of almonds and cinnamon. I saw much of it about Stratford, and in rowing on the Avon plucked its large clusters of fine, creamy white flowers from my boat." (*Burroughs' A Glance at British Wild-flowers.*)

132. **chase.** Properly "an unenclosed hunting ground which is private property."

141. **bailiff.** 'The steward or manager of an estate.'

171. **covers.** 'Underbrush which covers the game.'

177-8. The **network** of light and shadow made by the ripples on the surface may be observed in any shallow stream.

180. **shingly.** Adjective from 'shingle' in sense of 'gravel'; cf. *Lancelot and Elaine*, 53: "And down the shingly scaur he plunged"; and *Enoch Arden*, 768: "Lest the hard shingle should grate underfoot."

189. **Arno.** The river upon which Florence is built; see l. 35 above.

190. **Brunelleschi** (pronounced broonelléskee) was a famous Italian architect (1377-1446), the designer of the dome of the Cathedral of Florence.

196. **In converse seasons.** The poet subsequently changed this to "in April-autumns."

203. **bindweed-bells.** Flowers of the bindweed, a species of *Convolvulus* ('morning glory').

**briony.** The common briony is a plant with tendrils, like the cucumber, which is common in hedge-rows.

## SELECTIONS FROM "IN MEMORIAM."

Tennyson's *In Memoriam* consists of a series of more or less connected lyrical poems of the same stanza-form, but of varying lengths. The occasion of the series was the death of his most intimate friend Hallam, in September, 1833. Some of the lyrics date back to this year, and during the next seventeen years (*In Memoriam* was published in 1850) additional sections were written. "The sections were written," says Tennyson himself, "at many different places and as the phases of our intercourse came to my memory and suggested them. I did not write them with any view of weaving them into a whole, or for publication, until I found that I had written so many." Again he is quoted as saying:—"It is rather the cry of the whole human race than mine. In the poem altogether private grief swells out into the thought of, and hope of the whole world." *In Memoriam* in its final form contains one hundred and thirty-one sections, besides a prologue and an epilogue, and these sections cover a great variety of topics, some of them very remote from the initial subject. Arthur Henry Hallam, whose death is the occasion of the whole poem, was born February 1st, 1811; hence he was about eighteen months younger than Tennyson. Their friendship began at Trinity College, Cambridge, about 1829. Hallam impressed his contemporaries as a man of extraordinary ability and promise. His death, which was absolutely unexpected, took place in Venice while on a trip to the continent in company with his father, the distinguished historian.

## XXVII.

The earlier part of *In Memoriam* gives expression to the profundity of the poet's sorrow, and his feeling that his life had been permanently darkened by his loss. Yet, as a sort of conclusion to the whole matter, he states in this section, that it is better to pay this price for his friendship than to escape this great sorrow through never having known and loved his friend.

2. **rage.** Not in the narrow sense of 'anger,' but in the broader sense of intense feeling; cf. Gray's *Elegy* :

Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage  
And froze the genial current of the soul.

12. **want-begotten rest.** Contentment that arises from the lack of something.

## LXIV.

The poet has been discussing in the poem the problems of immortality, and accepts the view that upon death the soul immediately enters a

new sphere of existence and is conscious of what goes on in this lower world. He proceeds, in the present poem, to imagine how his dead friend may feel towards himself.

It will be noted that the somewhat unusual stanza adopted in this poem differs from a very common stanza merely through the arrangement of the rhymes, — a b b a instead of a b a b. In the present poem the lines of stanzas 2-6 may be read so as to make the rhymes alternate, without injury to the sense. It is interesting to read them thus, and to compare the effect with that of the stanzas as they are written.

## LXXXIII.

In *In Memoriam* the poet represents himself as gradually emerging from the hopelessness, gloom, and doubt which were the immediate effect of his calamity, and as winning a harvest from his affliction in higher impulse and a nobler view of life. In this section, he finds in the approach of spring, a premonition of this happy change.

9-12. The five flowers mentioned are all characteristic of an English spring.

## LXXXVI.

This poem was written at Barmouth, a watering place at the mouth of the Maw, on the coast of Wales, which Tennyson was visiting.

5. **rapt.** Cf. Tennyson's *Day Dream* :

And rapt through many a rosy change  
The twilight died into the dark.

7. **shadowing.** Cf. *The Lady of Shalott* :

Little breezes dusk and shiver.

**horned flood.** Milton uses this in *Paradise Lost*, xi, 831. The phrase here refers to the curve of the river between two promontories.

## CI.

In 1837 the Tennysons left the rectory at Somersby, which had long been the home of the family and where the poet himself was born.

11. **Lesser Wain.** Another name for the constellation of Ursa Minor; the polar star is at the end of the tail. "Wain" means 'waggon.'

14. **hern and crane.** Two species of birds.

22. **glebe.** Cf. Gray's *Elegy* :

Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke.

## CXIV.

In the latter part of *In Memoriam* the poet turns from his own more immediate concerns, to thoughts of the condition of mankind at large and their future ; he imagines how his friend, had he lived, would have influenced the world for good. The occasion of this poem, is the immense increase of knowledge in modern times. The poet distinguishes here (as in *Locksley Hall* : —“ Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers.”) *Knowledge* the product of mere intellect, from *wisdom* which is the outcome of character and implies moral as well as intellectual power. Cf. “ *Love thou thy land* ” :

Make knowledge circle with the winds  
But let her herald, Reverence fly  
Before her.

4. **pillars.** Her outmost limits ; the reference is to the idea of the ancient Greeks that the limits of navigation were marked by the pillars of Hercules where the Mediterranean opens into the ocean.

12. **Pallas.** The Greek story goes that Pallas Athens (the goddess of knowledge) sprang fully armed out of the brain of Zeus, her father.

## CXV.

2. **quick.** Quickset, a hedge of hawthorn.

3. **flowering squares.** The fields in spring ; cf. Tennyson's *Gardener's Daughter* :

All the land in flowering squares  
Smelt of the coming summer.

8. **sightless.** Invisible.

## CXVIII.

3-4. Don't imagine that spiritual forces are the product of mere matter,—the perishing elements of the body.

7 and fol. The poet here accepts the development theory and what is called the nebular hypothesis. The latter he outlines in *The Princess* :

This world was once a fluid haze of light,  
Till toward the centre set the starry tides,  
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast  
The planets.

14. **in higher place, i.e.** In the next world.

15. Make himself represent this same development from the lower to the higher, which is found in the world in general.

18. **or.** In the original edition this reads 'and.' Why the poet made the change, or what is the special force of *or* here, the present editor fails to perceive.

18-19. Pain and suffering are his glory because they raise him to higher things, as fire purifies ore.

26. **Fawn.** In Greek mythology, the fawn was partly man and partly beast in form, with strong animal proclivities.

28. The ape and tiger probably the instincts towards lust and violence.

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